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Bureau of Land Management
Coeur d'Alene District
Cottonwood Field Office, Idaho

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Cottonwood Resource Management Plan

Scoping Report



SUMMARY

The United States (US) Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is preparing a Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Cottonwood Field Office. The RMP will replace the 1981 Chief Joseph Management Framework Plan. Public involvement is a vital component of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for vesting the public in the decision-making process and allowing for full environmental disclosure. Public involvement for the Cottonwood RMP is being conducted in three phases:

- Public scoping prior to NEPA analysis to determine the scope of issues and alternatives to be addressed in the RMP/EIS;
- Public outreach via newsletters, news releases, newspaper advertisements, public collaboration (e.g. Community Economic Profile Workshop); and
- Public review and comment on the Draft RMP/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which includes analyzing likely environmental effects and identifying the preferred alternative.

This report documents the results of the first two phases of the public involvement process.

PUBLIC SCOPING ACTIVITIES

The scoping process for the Cottonwood RMP began on September 3, 2004, with the publication of a notice of intent (NOI) in the *Federal Register*. The purpose of the NOI was to inform the public of the BLM's intent to develop an RMP for those BLM-managed lands within the Cottonwood Field Office, which is the RMP planning area (Appendix A). The NOI also solicited public comments.

In September 2004, a Cottonwood RMP/EIS Web site was launched to serve as a clearinghouse of project information while the planning effort is underway. A link is available for Web site visitors to submit comments about the project. The Web site is available at www.cottonwoodrmp.com.

A newsletter was sent to interested parties on October 15, 2004, to inform them of the Cottonwood RMP planning effort, the location of three open houses, and the opportunity to comment. The newsletter was mailed to over 1,200 individuals on the distribution list. Newspaper advertisements and news releases also were published to notify the public of the project, to announce the three public open houses, to request public comments, and to provide contact information. A news release was issued to 20 media points on October 25, 2004. A display advertisement was published in the *Cottonwood Chronicle* on October 27, 2004; *Moscow-Pullman Daily News* on October 30, 2004; *Lewiston Morning Tribune* on October 31, 2004; *Idaho County Shopper* on November 2, 2004; and *Idaho County Free Press* on November 3, 2004.

Public open houses were held in Riggins, Grangeville, and Lewiston, Idaho, on November 1, 3, and 4, 2004, respectively. These open houses provided an opportunity for the public to receive information, ask questions, and provide input. Attendees had the opportunity to access the project Web site from a laptop computer. Fact sheets and handouts about the project and a map of the planning area were available, as was a list of the preliminary planning themes and issues related to the project. Prominent local facilities with access for the handicapped and located in informal settings, including a community center and armory, were chosen as venues to encourage broad participation. In addition to BLM representatives, a total of 21 people attended the open houses.

A Community Economic Profile Workshop was held in Grangeville, Idaho, on November 9, 2004. Twenty-five members of the public and other agencies attended the workshop and offered feedback into the economic vision of each region within the Cottonwood RMP planning area, specifically Idaho County, and how the BLM management of public lands could support the desired future of economic development.

PUBLIC SCOPING RESULTS

Comments were submitted in letters, postage-paid comment forms, electronic comment forms submitted from the Web site, and electronic mail messages. Official comments consist only of those submitted in written form, with the exception of one telephone conversation, which was requested to be recorded in writing for inclusion. All written submissions postmarked through November 15, 2004, are included in this analysis. Many of the submissions contained multiple comments on different topics. A total of 158 comments were made in the 31 written submissions received. All

information received during the scoping period, as outlined in this report, will be evaluated, verified, and incorporated into the RMP and EIS, as appropriate.

All submissions were read and evaluated to determine their content. Most submissions had several comments pointing to one opportunity or concern; thus, it was necessary to develop a method to systematically track and statistically describe all individual comments received. This was accomplished through a system in which individual comments within a longer letter or comment form were first logged and categorized by the comments and concerns of the letter. Individual comments were then entered into a database to assist with the analytical review. The database is structured to organize comments by planning theme, by geographical location from which the comment was submitted, and by affiliation of the commenter. These identifiers can be queried and tallied to provide quantitative information on larger concerns, as well as regions or groups providing the most feedback.

The majority (58 percent) of written submissions were from individuals, followed by organizations (16 percent). Most comment letters received from sources within the Cottonwood RMP planning area came from Idaho County, the largest county in the planning area. The majority of individual comments received from sources within the planning area, however, were from Latah County. This is because letters received from Latah County included a broader range of concerns and more individual comments within each letter. Most comment letters (29 percent) were received from counties outside of the planning area but within the state of Idaho. The majority of comments tended to focus on issues related to Transportation, Access, and Recreation (26 percent); Habitat Management of Special Status Species (17 percent); and Availability of Public Lands for Commercial Uses (13 percent).

Verbal comments received during the scoping meetings and through consultations and discussions with individuals, organizations, and agencies were compared and considered in the scoping evaluation. Results were similar to scoping comment submissions indicating grazing allotments and other commercial uses of the land was a primary topic of concern and question as well as access, economic sustainability, watershed and habitat restoration and protection, water quality, land exchanges, wild and scenic river designations, weeds management, and timber sales. The Nez Perce Tribe offered to share land management data with the BLM and to continue collaboration in order to promote a united effort.

ISSUE SUMMARY

In September 2003, the BLM developed a Preparation Plan to commence the planning process and to summarize the purpose and need of the RMP. This document also highlighted preliminary planning criteria and preliminary planning issues anticipated by the BLM interdisciplinary team. These

preliminary issues fell into eight preliminary themes. Most comments received during the public scoping period fell into these eight preliminary themes, and one additional theme, Water Resources, was added.

All comments received throughout the scoping period were compiled and distilled to identify prominent issues. Sources included the BLM's Preparation Plan preliminary issues; meetings with individuals, organizations, agencies, and tribal representatives; the Community Economic Profile Workshop; and written comments received during the formal public scoping period. These planning issues, along with subsequently identified issues, planning criteria, and other information (e.g., occurrence and development potential for minerals), will be used by the BLM and cooperators to help formulate a reasonable range of alternative management strategies that will be analyzed during the planning process. While not all comments and concerns are included in the planning issues, appropriate comments will be addressed by the RMP and will be considered in the effects analysis, although they will not have overriding influence on the development of alternatives. The nine planning issues are as follows.

1. How will the problem of invasive plant species be addressed?
2. How will forest vegetation be managed to attain desired stand structure and/or meet the range of natural variability?
3. How will special status species and their habitats be managed?
4. How will priority watersheds or areas be determined for conservation and/or restoration strategies?
5. How will motorized and nonmotorized travel be managed to provide access, while minimizing impacts to natural and cultural resources?
6. At what levels will commercial uses (minerals, forest products, livestock grazing, and recreation) be authorized?
7. Where and what types of fuels reduction will be implemented to reduce risk to the public, firefighters, property, and natural and cultural resources?
8. How will public land resources be managed in scattered and/or isolated parcels, given varied resource values and priorities?
9. How will existing and future demand for recreation on public lands be addressed?

FUTURE STEPS

Although the BLM welcomes public input at any time during the project, the next official public comment period will be open upon publication of the Draft RMP/EIS, which is anticipated in early 2006. The draft document will be widely distributed to elected officials, regulatory agencies, and members of the public, and will be available on the project Web site (www.cottonwoodrmp.com). The availability of the draft document will be announced in the *Federal Register*, and a 90-day public comment period will follow. Public meetings will be held in Riggins, Grangeville, and Lewiston, Idaho, during the 90-day period.

At the conclusion of the public comment period, the Draft RMP/EIS will be revised. A Proposed RMP/Final EIS will then be published. The availability of the proposed document will be announced in the *Federal Register*, and a 30-day public protest period will follow.

At the conclusion of the public protest period, the BLM will resolve all protests, and the approved RMP and Record of Decision will be published. The availability of these documents will be announced in the *Federal Register*.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Definition
ACEC	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
ATV	all-terrain vehicle
BLM	United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
EIS	environmental impact statement
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy and Management Act
Forest Service	United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service
IDEQ	Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NOI	Notice of Intent
OHV	off-highway vehicle
PACFISH	Interim Strategies for Managing Anadromous Fish Producing Watersheds in Eastern Oregon, and Washington, Idaho and Portions of California
RMP	resource management plan
US	United States
WSA	Wilderness Study Area

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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

The United States (US) Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is preparing a Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Coeur d'Alene District, Cottonwood Field Office. The RMP will replace the 1981 Chief Joseph Management Framework Plan.

1.1 OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (Public Law 91-190) and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing NEPA, federal agencies are required to consider the environmental impacts of their proposed actions prior to taking action. Actions that are subject to NEPA include those involving federal funding, those requiring federal permits, those involving federal facilities and equipment, and those that affect federal employees. The actions that would be proposed by the BLM as part of the RMP being developed for the Cottonwood Field Office are subject to the requirements of NEPA. Pursuant to NEPA, the BLM will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) on the Cottonwood RMP.

Public involvement is a vital component of NEPA, vesting the public in the decision-making process and allowing for full environmental disclosure. Guidance for implementing public involvement is codified in 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 1506, Part 6 [40 CFR 1506.6], thereby ensuring that federal agencies make a diligent effort to involve the public in preparing NEPA documents.

Objectives of Scoping

- ◆ Invite agencies and public to participate
- ◆ Identify a preliminary list of environmental and socioeconomic issues to address in the NEPA document
- ◆ Identify and eliminate concerns or issues determined to be insignificant

Public involvement for the Cottonwood RMP is being conducted in three phases:

- Public scoping prior to NEPA analysis to determine the scope of issues and alternatives to be addressed in the RMP/EIS;
- Public outreach via newsletters, news releases, newspaper advertisements, public collaboration (e.g., Community Economic Profile Workshop); and
- Public review and comment on the Draft RMP/EIS, which includes analyzing likely environmental effects and identifying the BLM's preferred alternative.

This report documents the results of the first two phases of the public involvement process.

Scoping is a process designed to determine the scope of issues and alternatives to be addressed in a NEPA document. Scoping has two components: internal scoping and external scoping. Internal scoping is conducted within an agency or cooperating agencies to determine preliminary issues and concerns. Internal scoping meetings were held with an interdisciplinary team of BLM resource specialists in 2003 to identify the preliminary planning issues and also the methods, procedures, and data that were to be used in the compilation of the RMP/EIS. These were compiled into an internal RMP Preparation Plan. All of the issues identified in the internal scoping process were relevant to BLM management in the Cottonwood Field Office since implementation of the Chief Joseph Management Framework Plan in 1981.

External scoping is a public process designed to reach beyond the BLM and attempts to clarify the concerns of high importance to the public. The public process is designed to determine and frame the scope of pertinent issues and alternatives to be addressed in a NEPA document. External scoping helps ensure that real problems are identified early and that they are properly studied; that issues of no concern do not consume time and effort; and that the proposed action and alternatives are balanced, able to be implemented, and thorough.

In accordance with 43 CFR 1610.2(d), the BLM must document the results of scoping. The BLM's land use planning guidance (Handbook H-1601-1) recommends the preparation of a Scoping Report to capture public input in one document. This report must summarize the individual comments received during the planning process' formal external scoping period. It also must describe the issues and management concerns from public scoping meetings, internal scoping meetings, and those included in the BLM's

Preparation Plan, as well as discuss how these comments will be incorporated into the RMP.

1.2 PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

An RMP is a land use plan that describes broad, multiple-use guidance for managing public lands administered by the BLM. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) directs the BLM to develop such land use plans to provide for appropriate uses of public land. Decisions in land use plans guide future land management actions and subsequent site-specific implementation decisions. These land use plan decisions establish goals and objectives (desired outcomes) for resource management and the measures needed to achieve them. These measures are expressed as actions and allowable uses (i.e., lands that are open or available for certain uses, including any applicable restrictions, and lands that are closed to certain uses).

The BLM developed and approved a land use plan for this area in 1981. At that time, the BLM used a different planning process and called their land use plans “Management Framework Plans.” Although the 1981 Chief Joseph Management Framework Plan for the Cottonwood Field Office has been amended, some of the existing plan is outdated. Laws, regulations, policies, and issues regarding management of these public lands have changed during the life of the existing plan. The BLM is developing a new RMP to ensure that it is in compliance with current mandates and that it addresses current issues. If there are decisions in the 1981 Management Framework Plan that are still valid, the BLM may bring them forward into the RMP. When completed, the RMP will replace the existing land use plan.

To support the RMP preparation, the BLM will prepare an EIS that provides a comprehensive evaluation of all environmental issues and impacts. NEPA requires the BLM to consider a range of alternatives in its planning process and to analyze and disclose the potential environmental impacts of proposed RMP decisions. The alternatives and the impact analysis are documented in the EIS. The EIS process also provides opportunities for participation by the public, other federal agencies, state and local governments, and tribal governments in the RMP development. The RMP and EIS will be combined into one document.

1.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING AREA

The planning area being considered in the RMP encompasses all lands, regardless of ownership, within the BLM Cottonwood Field Office boundary in Adams, Clearwater, Idaho, Latah, Lewis, and Nez Perce Counties in north-central Idaho; however, RMP decisions will only apply to the 144,430 acres of public land administered by the BLM within these counties (5,470 acres in Adams County, 3,948 acres in Clearwater County, 94,870 acres in Idaho County, 199 acres in Latah County, 8,199 acres in Lewis County, and 31,744 acres in Nez Perce County). Figure 1-1 depicts the Cottonwood RMP

planning area. Much of the BLM-managed land consists of scattered tracts intermingled with State of Idaho, private, Nez Perce Tribe, and National Forest System lands.

The Cottonwood RMP planning area is located in the southern part of the Idaho panhandle. The area is bordered to the west by the Oregon and Washington state lines, to the north by Benewah and Shoshone Counties, to the east by the Montana state line, and to the south by Valley County and portions of Adams County. The planning area lies entirely within the ceded territory of the Nez Perce Tribe. The Nez Perce Reservation lies entirely within the planning area, and there are about 17,586 acres of BLM-administered land within the reservation boundary.

1.4 DESCRIPTION OF THE SCOPING PROCESS

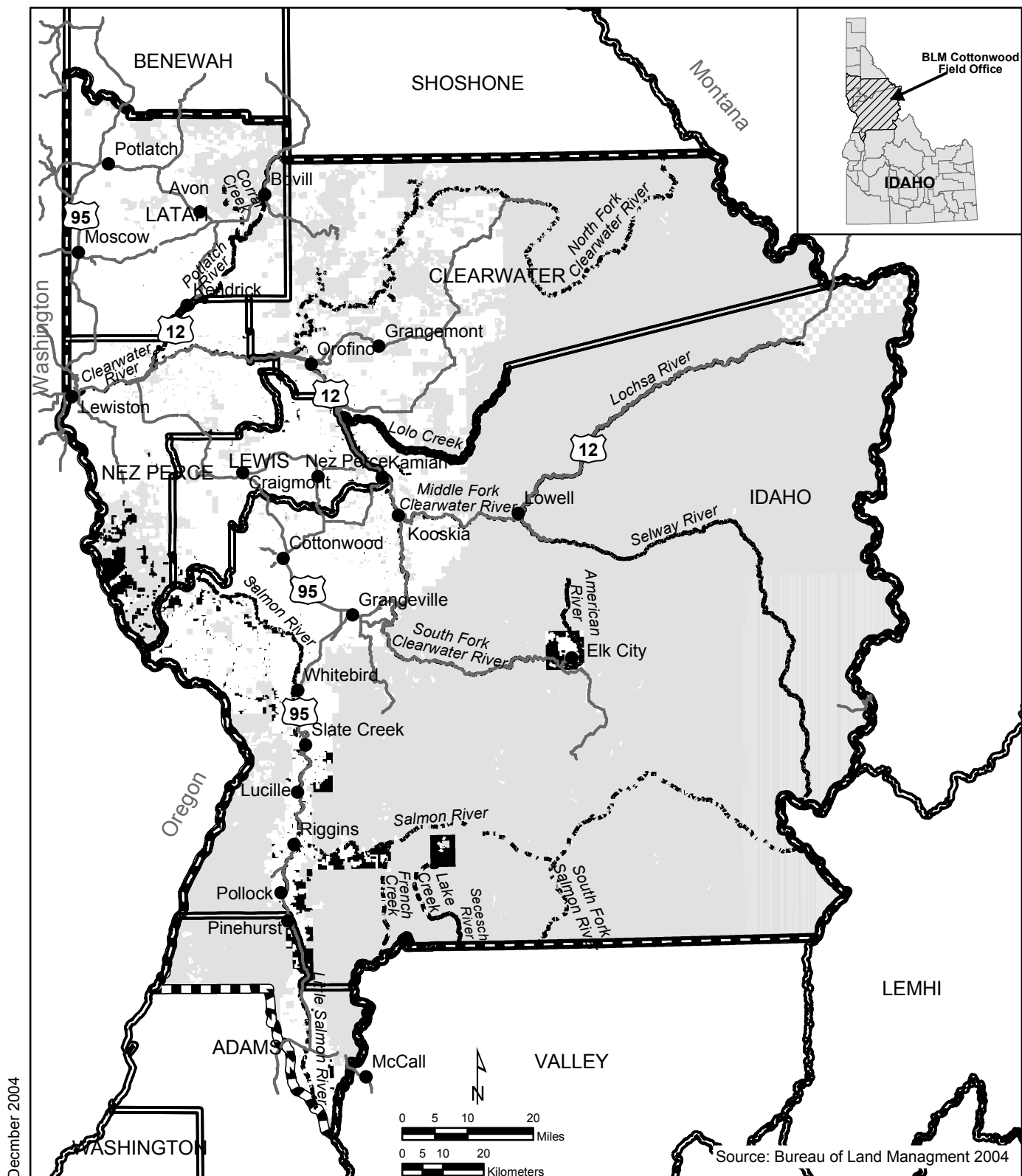
The BLM follows the public involvement requirements according to the CEQ regulations set forth in 40 CFR 1501.7, which states, “there should be an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed during the planning process.” The BLM solicits comments from relevant agencies and the public, organizes and analyzes all of the comments received, and then distills the comments to identify issues that will be addressed during the planning process. These issues are the scope of analysis for the RMP and are used to develop the project alternatives.

1.4.1 Notice of Intent

The formal public scoping process for the Cottonwood RMP/EIS began on September 3, 2004, with the publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) in the *Federal Register*. A copy of the NOI is included in Appendix A. The NOI initiated the public scoping process and served to notify the public of the BLM’s intent to develop an RMP for the Cottonwood Field Office. Under CEQ regulations, the public comment period must continue for at least 30 days; however, the BLM extended this public comment period until November 15, 2004, which provided 73 days for comment submittal. Although the formal comment period has ended, the BLM will continue to consider all comments received during the planning process.

1.4.2 Project Web Site

In September 2004, a Cottonwood RMP/EIS Web site was launched to serve as a clearinghouse of project information during the planning process. The Web site provides background information about the project, a public involvement timeline and calendar, maps and photos of the planning area, and copies of public information documents such as the NOI and newsletter. A link is also available for Web site visitors to submit comments about the project. The Web site is available at www.cottonwoodrmp.com.



No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of this data for individual or aggregate use with other data.

- Cities
- Major Roads
- - - Streams
- ▨ Cottonwood Field Office
- ▭ Counties

Land Ownership

- Bureau of Land Management
- Private
- ▭ Other Public Lands

Project Planning Area
Cottonwood Field Office, Idaho

Figure 1-1

1.4.3 Newsletter

The first newsletter for the Cottonwood RMP project was mailed on October 15, 2004, to over 1,200 individuals from the public, agencies, and organizations. The newsletter introduced the BLM and the RMP planning process; provided the preliminary issue themes and planning criteria, and project milestones timeline; and suggested methods for public involvement. The newsletter also provided the dates and venues for the three scoping open houses and the Community Economic Profile Workshop. The newsletter was posted on the project Web site (www.cottonwoodrmp.com) for public review. Future newsletters will be published at major project milestones and mailed to individuals and organizations that have requested to remain on the project distribution list. These newsletters also will be posted on the project Web site. Participants may request to receive newsletters through electronic mail.

1.4.4 News Release and Newspaper Advertisement

Advertisements were published in the following newspapers to notify the public of the project, to announce the three public open houses, to request public comments, and to provide contact information:

- *Cottonwood Chronicle*: October 27, 2004;
- *Moscow-Pullman Daily News*: October 30, 2004;
- *Lewiston Morning Tribune*: October 31, 2004;
- *Idaho County Shopper*: November 2, 2004; and
- *Idaho County Free Press*: November 3, 2004.

A news release also was issued to 20 media points on October 25, 2004. The newspaper advertisement and news release can be found on the project Web site at www.cottonwoodrmp.com.

1.4.5 Scoping Open Houses

The BLM hosted three public scoping open houses to further provide the public with opportunities to become involved, learn about the project and planning process, and offer comments. As described in Section 1.4.4, the meetings were advertised in local media. Additionally, agency staff and members of the public who have participated in past BLM activities and have been included in past BLM distribution lists were mailed the newsletter advertising the meetings. The newsletter was mailed to more than 1,200 individuals and organizations.

Open houses were held in three locations within the project planning area during the first week of November 2004 (Table 1-1).

Table 1-1
Open House Schedule and Attendance

Venue	Location	Date	Time	Attendance
City of Riggins, Heritage Center	Riggins, Idaho	November 1, 2004	5:30–7:00 p.m.	2
Grangeville National Guard Armory	Grangeville, Idaho	November 3, 2004	5:30–7:00 p.m.	8
City of Lewiston, Community Center	Lewiston, Idaho	November 4, 2004	5:30–7:00 p.m.	11
Total				21

An open house format was chosen over the more formal public meeting format to encourage broader participation, to allow attendees to learn about the project at their own pace, and to enable people to ask questions of BLM representatives in an informal, one-on-one setting. Attendees had the opportunity to access the project Web site from a laptop computer. Fact sheets and handouts about the project and a map of the planning area were available, as was a list of the preliminary planning issue themes and planning criteria related to the project. Prominent local facilities with access for the handicapped and located in informal settings, including a community center and armory, were chosen as venues to encourage broad participation. In addition to BLM representatives, a total of 21 people attended the open houses.

The main concerns heard from the public at the open houses included:

- Interest in the availability of grazing allotments;
- Concerns about possible restrictions created on private land adjacent to the Lolo Creek corridor (as related to the wild and scenic rivers study being conducted for the RMP);
- Continued interest by Bennett Forest Industries in the dependable supply of timber for their mill and in cooperative efforts regarding stewardship work and exploring opportunities for biomass utilization; and
- Consultation between the Cottonwood Field Office and the Nez Perce Tribe Water Resources Specialists to specifically consider their interests and concerns.

1.4.6 Community Economic Profile Workshop

On November 9, 2004, the BLM hosted a Community Economic Profile Workshop in Grangeville, Idaho, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Economist Dr. Richard Gardner facilitated the workshop. Fifteen members of the public and local government representatives attended the workshop and talked

about economic growth and developing visions for the future of their communities. The attendees also discussed how BLM management of public lands could help support economic growth in local communities. Visions were developed for the areas around the towns of Cottonwood, Elk City, and Grangeville, as summarized below:

Cottonwood Vision

Cottonwood has an opportunity to get involved with the community of Nez Perce in the development of biofuels. The Nez Perce Tribe is also exploring this opportunity. Five million dollars are being spent on a conference center at St. Gertrude's. This will be open to the public and should foster group retreat business. There is considerable potential for the expansion of medical services and assisted living for seniors. There is potential for more river recreation accessed out of Cottonwood.

Elk City Vision

The desired condition is to remain a natural resource-based community, with small businesses of less than 30 employees that are consistent with a small community. Jobs paying 10 to 20 dollars per hour are sought. Preserving the small town neighborhood feeling is important. Community members do not want to tax existing infrastructure with large developments. Some said they want Elk City to return to being a timber community, and there is considerable fear and anxiety with the upcoming closing of the timber mill. Elk City growth is limited by the lack of available private land.

Grangeville Vision

The airport needs to be developed with businesses that use its capacity. The timber mill is expanding. Explore the possible expansion of medical facilities. School enrollments are declining, and there is concern that retirees will not help that. Retirees may lead to more and better services, such as more restaurants, more personal services, and more support for arts and cultural activities. More senior housing choices would help attract and retain retirees. Continued development of country homes and ranchettes is likely, and planned developments with more units are likely to be coming.

Desired Economic Goals

A brainstorming session among the group provided several objectives to reach the desired economic goals of each region. Some of these strategies included:

- Establishing stewardship contracts, which would allow contractors to trade services to improve public lands;
- Providing wildland-urban interface protection and encouraging fire-safe education by cost sharing for wildland-urban interface projects;

- Elevating the priority of invasive species management and control by recruiting more organizations and groups;
- Facilitating recreational mining in Elk City;
- Promoting river recreation programs and managing corridors for recreation;
- Creating centralized interagency programs for fire suppression dispatch, emergency communication system, road maintenance; and
- Identifying communities where regional populations are aging or attracting older retirees and redistributing recreational activities to provide these communities with increased opportunities for senior recreation (e.g., mushroom and berry picking, handicap access to fishing).

1.4.7 Meetings with Collaborating Agencies

On October 6, 2003, the BLM met with the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) to discuss the BLM's planning process and objectives and the IDEQ's concerns. The primary concerns and discussions of the agency included:

- Watershed management and surface water for municipal use, smoke management and the Clean Water Act, Section 303(d), "impaired waterbodies" list (also termed the 303(d) list). (The 303(d) list identifies waterbodies that have been classified as violating state or tribal water quality standards, thereby restricting the types and amounts of activities that can take place in these watersheds.) Both agencies agreed to share mapped information regarding the locations of municipal watersheds, BLM ownership boundaries, groundwater system locations, and airshed maps;
- Prior to land exchanges, an assessment is needed to evaluate potential future land uses and their impacts to water use and watershed. This assessment would further prioritize areas of concern for management of the 303(d) listing program;
- Adequate monitoring and implementation of best management practices to be followed for all activities that will take place within watersheds;
- Formation of a response plan to incidents involving hazardous materials;
- The IDEQ's total maximum daily load policy is No Net Increase until a recovery plan is in place for impaired watersheds; and
- Continuing IDEQ work with the BLM river patrol to attain access for stream surveys.

On September 27, 2004, BLM representatives met with the Clearwater County Commissioners and gave a presentation on the RMP planning process and opportunities for their involvement. The Clearwater County Commissioners currently support BLM projects such as the Pink House reconstruction, timber sale administration near Dworshak Reservoir, the Clearwater Management Council and the Clearwater Basin Weed Management Committee. Questions and concerns were raised during the meeting regarding impacts from restrictions resulting from potential wild and scenic river designations in the Lolo Creek area. The Clearwater County Commissioners were also interested in the land acquisition strategy and land tenure plan.

1.4.8 Newspaper Articles

On October 27, 2004, the *Idaho County Free Press* published an article announcing the BLM's plan to prepare an RMP for the Cottonwood Field Office. The dates and locations of the three public open houses were provided, as well as a description of the planning area and preliminary planning issue themes. The news article mentioned the associated EIS being prepared for the RMP to assess environmental, social, and economic effects of the project. Contact information was provided and comments were solicited through the scoping period deadline of November 15, 2004.

A second news article was published in the *Lewiston Tribune* on November 1, 2004. Mr. Eric Barker of the *Lewiston Tribune* interviewed Ms. Carrie Christman, Cottonwood Field Office Assistant Field Manager and RMP Project Manager, during preparation of the article. In addition to announcing the preparation of the RMP and the locations and times of the public open houses, this article discussed some of the primary public land topics, including managing recreation, preventing the spread of noxious weeds, and balancing logging and grazing with preservation. The article discussed some of the more-prominent land and recreation areas within the planning area, including the Lower Salmon River, Craig Mountain, Lolo Creek, and Hammer Creek.

Copies of these articles are included in Appendix B of this document.

1.4.9 Mailing List

The BLM compiled a list of individuals, agencies, and organizations that have participated in past BLM projects and/or requested to be on the mailing list. This database included over 1,200 listings. Each of these individual listings was mailed the initial newsletter (discussed in Section 1.4.3, Newsletter). Recipients of the newsletter and visitors to the public scoping open houses were asked to specifically request to stay on the official RMP project mailing list to receive future mailings. The BLM received several requests for removal from the mailing list due to duplications, many mailings were returned due to an incorrect address, and several new entries were added. Through this

process, the mailing list was revised to approximately 150 entries. Requests to be added to or remain on the official Cottonwood RMP distribution list will continue to be accepted throughout the planning process.

1.5 COOPERATING AGENCIES/INVITEES

A “Cooperating Agency” is any federal, state, or local government agency or Indian tribe that enters into a formal agreement with the lead federal agency to assist in the development of an environmental analysis. On August 26, 2004, the BLM mailed letters to the following local, state, federal, and tribal representatives inviting them to participate as cooperating agencies for the Cottonwood RMP:

- Adams County Commissioners;
- Clearwater County Commissioners;
- Idaho County Commissioners;
- Idaho Department of Commerce/Tourism Division;
- Idaho Department of Fish and Game;
- Idaho Department of Lands;
- Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation;
- Idaho Department of Environmental Quality;
- Latah County Commissioners;
- Lewis County Commissioners;
- Nez Perce County Commissioners; and
- Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee.

These agencies declined the offer of a formal relationship as a Cooperating Agency; however, several agencies have expressed interest in developing a collaborative partnership with the BLM. That is, these agencies will “work with the BLM, sharing knowledge and resources, to achieve desired outcomes for public lands and communities within statutory and regulatory frameworks” (BLM Land Use Planning Handbook H-1601-1).

The benefits of enhanced collaboration among agencies in the preparation of NEPA analyses include disclosing relevant information early in the analytical process; applying available technical expertise and staff support; avoiding duplication with other federal, state, tribal, and local procedures; and establishing a mechanism for addressing intergovernmental issues.

To initiate the collaborative planning process, on October 15, 2004, BLM mailed letters inviting the aforementioned federal, state, local, and tribal

organizations to the three scoping open houses held during the first week of November. The newsletter accompanied each letter.

1.6 COLLABORATION AND CONSULTATION WITH TRIBES

On August 3, 2004, the BLM attended the Natural Resource Subcommittee Meeting for the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee to inform the committee of the Cottonwood RMP planning process and invite them to participate.

On December 10, 2004, the BLM met with resource specialists within the Nez Perce Tribe, Natural Resources Subcommittee to discuss specific resource concerns and issues within the planning area. Some of the discussions and concerns included the following topics:

- The Nez Perce Tribe will be preparing an inventory of their land parcels for which management plans must be prepared. They are interested in collaborating with the BLM on adjacent lands;
- BLM prioritization of conservation restoration watersheds considering the interspersed land parcels;
- Delineation of management areas in the RMP. Mr. Greg Yuncevich, BLM Cottonwood Field Manager, responded that although utilization of fire management areas may be possible, most areas vary by issue (e.g. river corridor areas, the Craig Mountains, mining townships, and rural corridors). Mr. Scott Althouse, Tribal Policy Specialist and Biologist, suggested that the BLM lay out management prescriptions for these areas;
- Land tenure areas targeted for disposal or acquisition. These should be considered as an important management tool;
- The Nez Perce settlement of Snake River Basin adjudication has delayed a decision on how BLM lands will be managed on the Nez Perce Reservations. Mr. Yuncevich identified the need for a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the 11,000 acres identified under this adjudication as available to the tribe;
- Fuels management versus water quality;
- Mr. Loren Kronemann, Tribal Wildlife Biologist commented that projects within the Elk City area need to have cumulative effects analyses that consider US Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (Forest Service) management.
- Mr. Althouse recommended the East Fork of the American River for conservation and protection focus and expressed interest in the BLM's Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) process and consideration of this area;

- Mr. Althouse recommended PACFISH (Interim Strategies for Managing Anadromous Fish Producing Watersheds in Eastern Oregon, and Washington, Idaho and Portions of California) or better riparian buffer zone guidelines;
- Mr. Althouse identified his main concerns as protection from sediment delivery and restoration of fish habitat;
- Ms. Elisabeth Brackney, Tribal Wetlands Biologist, recommended fencing and providing special protection for wetlands including exclusion of grazing; and
- Mr. Althouse suggested that a follow-up meeting be scheduled in conjunction with the tribe's Natural Resources Subcommittee meeting.

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SECTION 2

COMMENT SUMMARY

2.1 METHOD OF COMMENT COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

All written scoping comments documented in this Scoping Summary Report were received or postmarked by the November 15, 2004, deadline. Therefore, no comments were dismissed from this evaluation. The BLM will continue to accept comments throughout the planning process. Official comments consist only of those submitted in written form, with the exception of one telephone conversation, which was requested to be recorded in writing for inclusion. Individuals were otherwise encouraged to submit comments in writing unless a special request was made. A total of 31 submissions were received:

- 67.7% by mail [a postage-paid comment form was provided in the newsletter and at the scoping meetings];
- 16.1% by electronic mail;
- 6.5% through the link at the project Web site;
- 3.2% by facsimile;
- 3.2% by telephone log; and
- 3.2% by hand delivery to the BLM Field Office.

These 31 submissions included a total of 158 individual comments. The postage-paid and Web-based comment forms provided instructions on requesting confidentiality and on requesting that individual names or addresses be withheld from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act.

To ensure that public comments were properly registered and that none were overlooked, a three-phase management and tracking system was adopted. First, comments were logged, and issues and concerns within the submission

were categorized into one of the planning issue themes. Since not all comments were on planning issues, the comments were evaluated to identify additional issues that will be addressed during the planning process. Second, individual comments were entered into a database to assist with the analytical review. The database is structured to organize comments by planning issue theme, by geographical location of the commenter, and by affiliation of the commenter. Finally, these identifiers were queried and tallied to provide quantitative information on issue themes, as well as regions or groups providing the most feedback.

2.2 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED

2.2.1 Comments by Affiliation

Table 2-1 and Figure 2-1 show the number and proportion of individual comments received by each type of affiliation. The number of individual comments (158) exceeds the number of submissions received (31) because many submissions included multiple comments. Many of these comments pertained to more than one resource issue theme and were therefore considered as separate comments on that theme.

Members of the general public who did not disclose a particular affiliation provided 58.1 percent of the comments received during the Cottonwood RMP scoping period. Local, state, and federal governmental agencies provided 25.8 percent of the comments received, and local interest groups and organizations provided 16.1 percent. No comments were received from elected officials, tribal governments or organizations, or local businesses.

Table 2-1
Number of Written Submissions per Affiliation

Affiliation	Number of Written Submissions
Individual	18
Organization	5
Business	0
Federal Agency	3
State Agency	4
Local Agency	1
Tribal Government	0
Elected Officials	0
Total	31

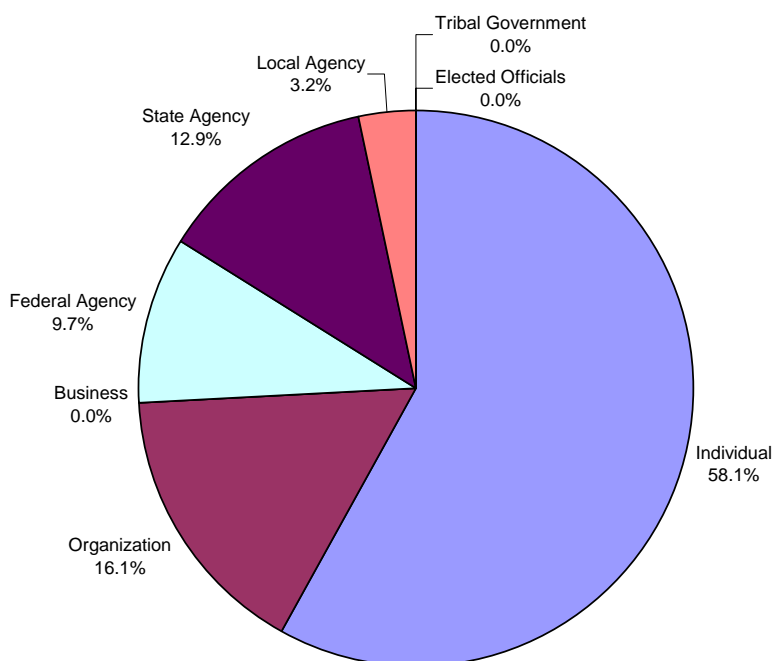
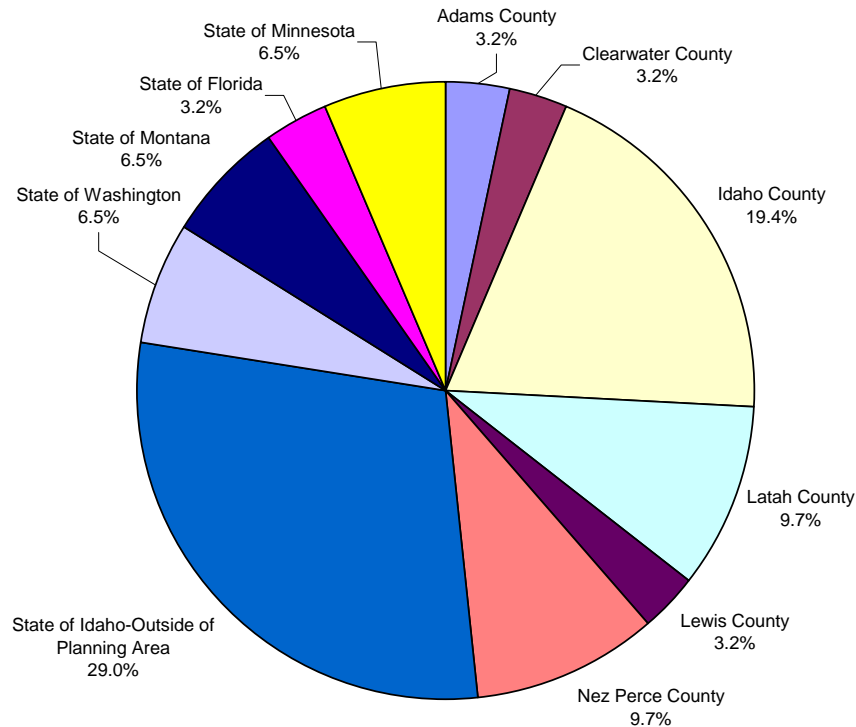
Figure 2-1 Proportion of Written Submissions per Affiliation**2.2.2 Comments by Geographical Area**

Table 2-2 and Figures 2-2 and 2-3 show the number and proportion of individual comments received from each geographical area. About 23 percent of submissions came from addresses outside of Idaho. About 29 percent of the comments received were from Idaho residents living outside of the planning area. The remaining 48 percent of submissions were received from people residing in one of the six counties within the planning area. Idaho County residents provided the greatest portion (19 percent) of the total submissions.

Table 2-2
Number of Individual Comments per Geographical Area

Geographical Source of Comments	Number of Comment Letters	Number of Individual Comments
Adams County	1	1
Clearwater County	1	2
Idaho County	6	17
Latah County	3	19
Lewis County	1	11
Nez Perce County	3	13
State of Idaho-Outside of Planning Area	9	50
State of Washington	2	22
State of Montana	2	16
State of Florida	1	2
State of Minnesota	2	5
Total	31	158

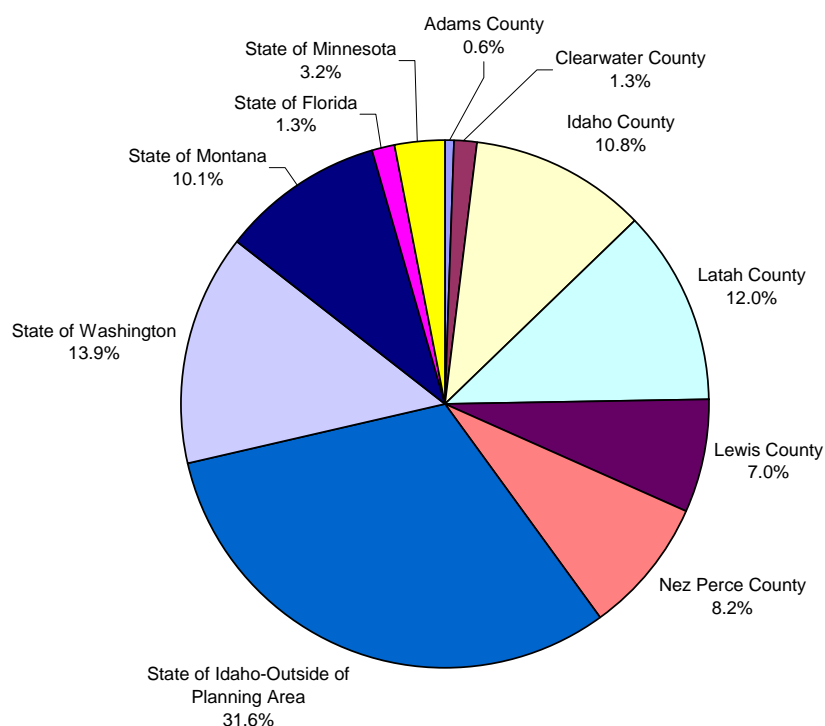
Figure 2-2 Proportion of Individual Comment Letters per Geographical Area

2.2.3 Comments by Planning Issue Theme

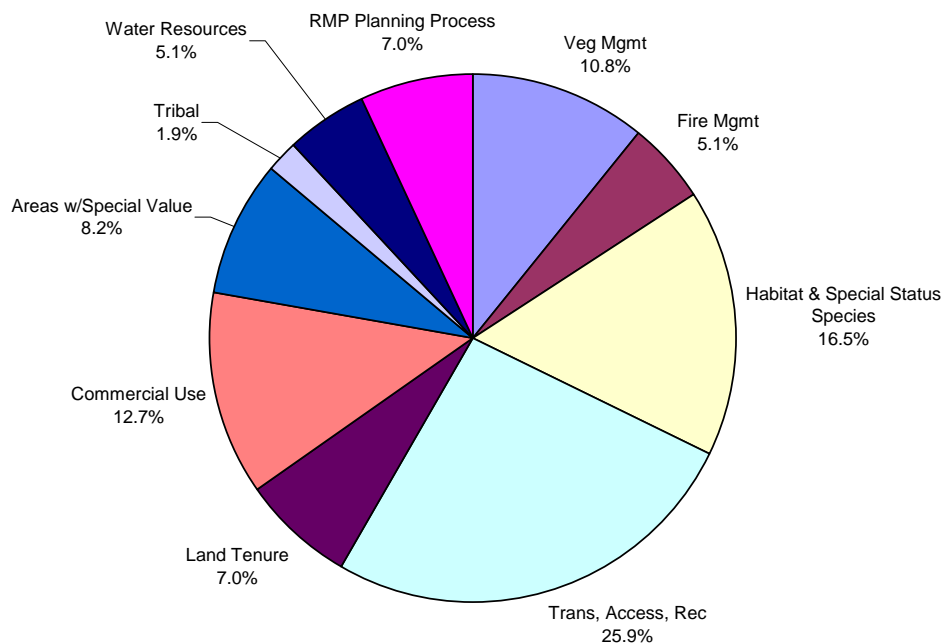
Table 2-3 and Figure 2-4 show the number and proportion of individual comments on each planning issue theme. The number of individual comments totals more than the number of written submissions received because many written submissions included multiple comments. Many of these comments pertained to more than one resource issue theme and were therefore considered as separate comments for each theme. Section 3 provides comments separated by planning issue.

The majority of comments tended to focus on issues related to Transportation, Access, and Recreation (25.9 percent); Habitat Management for Wildlife and Special Status Species (16.5 percent); and Availability and Management of Public Lands for Commercial Uses (12.7 percent).

Similar to the official scoping results, as summarized in Section 1.4.5, *Scoping Open Houses*, verbal comments and questions posed at the November 2004 Cottonwood RMP scoping open houses tended to be on some of the same issue themes and concerns as the written comments. Grazing allotments and other commercial uses of the land represented a primary theme. Access and

Figure 2-3 Proportion of Individual Comments per Geographical Source of Comment**Table 2-3
Number of Individual Comments per Planning Theme**

Planning Theme	Number of Individual Comments
Vegetation Management	17
Fire Management	8
Habitat Management for Wildlife and Special Status Species	26
Transportation, Public Access, and Recreational Opportunities	41
Land Tenure Adjustments	11
Availability and Management of Public Lands for Commercial Uses	20
Special Values Area Management	13
Tribal Treaty Rights and Trust Responsibilities	3
Water Resources	8
RMP Process Issues	11
Total	158

Figure 2-4 Proportion of Individual Comments per Planning Theme

Recreation was another concern, as well as tribal consultation. Only two of the 21 scoping meeting attendees (9.5 percent) submitted written comments during the scoping period.

Likewise, during BLM consultation with groups and individuals, including the Community Economic Profile Workshop (see Section 1.4.6, *Community Economic Profile Workshop*, for a detailed discussion), IDEQ and the Clearwater County Commissioners (see Section 1.4.7, *Meetings with Collaborating Agencies*), and the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee (see Section 1.6, *Collaboration and Consultation with Tribes*), similar issues were discussed. Socioeconomic issues discussed at the workshop were primarily on commercial and developmental uses of public lands and how the BLM RMP process can support the area's economic needs. Other themes and issues raised during consultation meetings were watershed and habitat restoration and protection, water quality, land exchanges, fire management, wild and scenic river designations, weeds management, and timber sales. The Nez Perce Tribe offered to share land management data with the BLM and to continue collaboration in order to promote a united effort.

SECTION 3

ISSUE SUMMARY

Issue identification is the first step of the nine-step BLM planning process. As defined in the BLM Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1), planning issues are concerns or controversies about existing and potential land and resource allocations, levels of resource use, production, and related management practices. Issues include concerns; needs; and resource use, development, and protection opportunities for consideration in RMP preparation. These issues may stem from new information or changed circumstances and from the need to reassess the appropriate mix of allowable uses.

3.1 CHRONOLOGY OF PLANNING ISSUE DEVELOPMENT

The BLM enacted a multi-step issue-identification process for the Cottonwood RMP planning effort that began in 2003.

In September 2003, the BLM prepared a Preparation Plan for the Cottonwood RMP. This plan, used by the interdisciplinary team to commence the planning process, summarized the purpose and need for the RMP. It also highlighted preliminary planning criteria and preliminary planning issues anticipated by the BLM interdisciplinary team during internal scoping. Based on the lands and resources managed in the planning area, these preliminary issues fell into eight preliminary themes in the Preparation Plan:

1. Vegetation management;
2. Fire management;
3. Habitat management for wildlife and special status species;
4. Management of transportation, public access, and recreational opportunities;

5. Land tenure adjustments;
6. Availability and management of public lands for commercial uses;
7. Management of areas with special value; and
8. Tribal treaty rights and trust responsibilities.

These preliminary issue themes were expected to encompass most public issues and concerns and to serve as a starting point to spark public consideration; they were not meant to be all-inclusive. Specific planning questions, or preliminary planning issues, were developed for each of these preliminary themes. The preliminary issues are included in Section 3.3.

The BLM then issued the NOI to prepare the RMP, which initiated the 73-day scoping period and solicited written comments from the public (further discussed in Section 1.4, *Description of the Scoping Process*). Scoping is a collaborative public involvement process to identify and refine planning issues to be addressed in the planning process. During the scoping period, the BLM also met with interested groups, tribes, and agencies, as discussed in Sections 1.4.7, *Meetings with Collaborating Agencies*, and 1.6, *Collaboration and Consultation with Tribes*. The BLM hosted a Community Economic Profile Workshop and three open houses, and solicited written comments from the public during the scoping period. The scoping period provided the BLM additional information on the public's concerns and suggestions regarding the planning area.

One new planning theme identified during the scoping period was not included in the BLM's preliminary list (discussed above). This theme, Water Resources, was suggested by several community members, including Idaho County, Latah County, areas in the greater state of Idaho, and Washington state. There was not an identifiable trend related to the geographical source of the comments. The main concerns expressed by the public regarding water resources included water quality degradation and watershed restoration. These concerns were originally considered by the BLM as a component of two separate preliminary themes, Vegetation Management and Habitat Management for Wildlife and Special Status Species, because water resource-related impacts would likely be most recognizable when biological components were affected, which would trigger the BLM's involvement. However, based on public comments, the BLM understands that management of various resources could affect watersheds in the planning area, and watershed quality should be considered regardless of ownership. As such, Water Resources has been added as the ninth planning theme for the Cottonwood RMP/EIS.

Information compiled in the Preparation Plan; gathered from meetings with interested individuals, organizations, agencies, and tribal representatives; discussed at the Community Economic Profile Workshop; and heard and

accepted during the public scoping process were compiled and evaluated to supplement and refine the preliminary issue themes and to develop discreet planning issues, which are discussed below in Section 3.2.

3.2 PLANNING ISSUES

The planning issues will be used to develop alternative management strategies that will be analyzed during the planning process. These were compiled based on the Preparation Plan preliminary issues; meetings with individuals, organizations, agencies, and tribal representatives; the Community Economic Profile Workshop; and during the public scoping process. The public comments received during the scoping process are discussed in Section 3.3. Specifically, only those comments shown in Category A of the tables in Section 3.3 were considered while developing the issues, because Category A indicates comments that will be addressed and/or considered in the RMP.

The following planning issues, along with subsequently identified issues, planning criteria, and other information (e.g., occurrence and development potential for minerals), will be used by the BLM and cooperators to help formulate a reasonable range of alternatives for the RMP:

1. How will the problem of invasive plant species be addressed?
2. How will forest vegetation be managed to attain desired stand structure and/or meet the range of natural variability?
3. How will special status species and their habitats be managed?
4. How will priority watersheds or areas be determined for conservation and/or restoration strategies?
5. How will motorized and nonmotorized travel be managed to provide access, while minimizing impacts to natural and cultural resources?
6. At what levels will commercial uses (minerals, forest products, livestock grazing, and recreation) be authorized?
7. Where and what types of fuels reduction will be implemented to reduce risk to the public, firefighters, property, and natural and cultural resources?
8. How will public land resources be managed in scattered and/or isolated parcels, given varied resource values and priorities?
9. How will existing and future demand for recreation on public lands be addressed?

It is important to note that, while many concerns are included in the nine planning themes, not all concerns and comments are included in the planning issues. These other concerns and comments – which include comments in Category A that are not explicitly included in issue statements and management concerns identified during personal meetings with BLM staff or from the Preparation Plan – will still be addressed by the RMP and considered in the effects analysis, but these concerns will not have overriding influence on the development of alternatives. In addition, as the planning process proceeds, there may be additional adjustments or additions to the planning issues as the BLM continues to review information, meet with the interdisciplinary team, and talk with the public.

3.3 PUBLIC COMMENTS BY PLANNING THEME

All individual comments received during public scoping were entered into a database and assigned a planning classification. These classifications indicate which public concerns will be addressed and resolved through this planning effort and which ones will not. Comments under Category A are those that will be addressed/considered in the RMP. Comments under Category B will be resolved through policy or administrative actions. Comments under Category C can be addressed by the BLM independently of this planning effort and/or are concerns that the BLM is already actively addressing. Comments under Category D are beyond the scope of this planning effort. Tables 3-1 through 3-10 depict the anticipated decisions to be made for each resource issue. This section is sorted by planning theme.

The number of individual comments exceeded the number of written submissions received because many written submissions included multiple individual comments. Many of these individual comments pertain to more than one planning theme and are therefore considered under all applicable themes. As such, some comments are included in more than one table (Tables 3-1 through 3-10).

3.3.1 Vegetation Management

Past and current management activities, such as timber harvest, road construction, mining, recreation, and/or effects of activities on surrounding private land continue to affect the natural function and condition of riparian areas, upland vegetation communities, and forested areas. Riparian and wetland habitats, including streams, springs, seeps and meadow areas, are of critical importance to fish and wildlife species. They comprise approximately 10 percent of the landscape, yet provide important habitat for a significant portion of the fish and wildlife species. Healthy riparian, upland, and forest communities have good species diversity and structural integrity, and are naturally resistant to severe wildfires. They provide fish and wildlife habitat, soil stabilization, increased infiltration of precipitation, and watershed protection, and they enhance recreation and aesthetic values.

The planning area contains over 65,000 acres of forest lands that provide wildlife habitat, watershed protection, recreational and aesthetic value, and forest products. Fire suppression and harvest activities of the past century, prolonged drought throughout the last decade, and historical harvesting methods have changed the pre-settlement character of tree species composition, stand densities, and stand structure. Deteriorating stands of lodgepole pine have caused a marked increase in insect populations and a resulting increase in mortality. This has led to an increased fire risk in these areas.

Noxious weeds and other invasive plant species can affect native plants, special status species, wildlife and livestock forage, water quality, and fire management. The BLM is responsible for controlling noxious weeds on public lands and coordinating with state, county, and private landowners to reduce the spread of undesirable plant species by implementing integrated weed management programs.

Preparation Plan Preliminary Issues/Planning Questions

The following preliminary issue questions were identified by the BLM in the Preparation Plan for the issue theme, Vegetation Management:

- ? How will uses and activities be managed to achieve, maintain, or improve riparian, upland, and forest communities, with an emphasis on native species restoration?
- ? How will management of BLM lands affect the social and economic resiliency and sustainability of local economies?
- ? What actions and/or restrictions will be needed to maintain or improve natural resource values that have been affected by, or are susceptible to, noxious weeds and other undesirable plant species?
- ? How will forest health be maintained and restored?
- ? Where and at what harvest levels will the BLM provide for forest products?

Public Comment Summary

Management of noxious weeds and exotic species was the primary public concern regarding vegetation management. Specifically, concerns pertained to the effects of weeds on other resources (e.g., water quality, wilderness, and wildlife), as well as the contribution of other activities (e.g., recreational activities and vehicular access), on the spread of weeds and exotic species. Other comments requested botanical surveys and vegetation management considerations in relation to fuels management.

Table 3-1
Planning Classification for Comments Regarding Vegetation Management

Comment	Planning Classification ¹			
	A	B	C	D
Prior to any use of BLM lands for extractive purposes (mining, grazing, timber production) we encourage botanical surveys of the land to be impacted.	X			
Prevent continued loss, and promote long-term sustainability, of old growth stands, and restore where possible the geographic extent and connectivity of old growth.	X			
In the current plan how are the following issues addressed: rare and sensitive plants, weed control, riparian protection and restoration, and regulating commercial harvesting of non-timber resources? What are the rankings of stream health on BLM lands? More importantly, how will these issues be addressed in the Resource Management Plan under development?	X			
ISDA desires that the issue of noxious weeds will be addressed by the RMP and EIS.	X			
Significant effects to the environment - Native plants and native vegetative patterns - Management objectives must include rapid detection, containment, and control of nonindigenous weeds species. Harmful nonindigenous weed species transform the vegetation composition through competitive exclusion of native species and the facilitation of wildfires. If given an opportunity, infestations occur rapidly. There are several species of noxious and invasive weeds that grow and spread in the ecological setting of the Cottonwood Field Office. Many weeds thrive after fire and out-compete native forbs and grasses.	X			
Water quality - Water quality can be greatly impacted by infestations of harmful nonindigenous weed species. Infiltration may be reduced and runoff increased in sites dominated by weeds such as Spotted Knapweed.	X			
Wilderness - Management activities can positively affect nearby wilderness areas. The very nature of pristine areas can be negatively affected by noxious and invasive weeds. Early detection and treatment options must be available and utilized.	X			
All treatment options must be considered to protect the wilderness resource values. The recreational use of contiguous wilderness leaves the area susceptible to introduction of harmful vegetative species. The project must be flexible enough to allow for a large treatment area. Recreational opportunities within the Cottonwood Field Office and the contiguous wilderness should be limited long term, however, by management objectives or treatment options.	X			
Control of noxious or invasive weeds through various methods, including herbicides, can benefit Idaho's wildlife resources.	X			
Economic impacts (pertaining to weeds management) are measured (by ISDA) in three ways: (1) the direct costs of management and control, (2) the direct or indirect costs of lost productivity or impacts to species with economic or ecological values, and, (3) rates of spread or other measures to the extent of the species.	X			

Table 3-1
Planning Classification for Comments Regarding Vegetation Management *(continued)*

Comment	Planning Classification ¹			
	A	B	C	D
I urge BLM to place a high priority on weed management. Having been on the Idaho County weed advisory board in the past, it is my contention that once inventories it's imperative to take direct action. While the USFS studies the weeds to death, I think it would be more proactive to fund technicians to spray and disseminate biological controls.	X			
In addition to weeds, other exotic species should be addressed. They have impacts on native species. Exotics include certain fish species, plants like crested wheatgrass, and terrestrial species like turkeys and chukar.	X			
Weed management should emphasize prevention. It is the most effective way to manage weeds.	X			
Weed control is exceedingly important. This may involve restricting recreational or other access to sensitive areas. Preventing invasive plants from entering is much better than controlling them afterwards. Although detailed protocols have been established for weed control, the efforts appear to be failing and weeds are spreading fast and far. Longitudinal research in specific areas and more innovative and stringent controls are needed.	X			
Off-road vehicle and snowmobile use should occur only on designated roads. Weed spread is a major problem in the area, especially in the Salmon River drainage.	X			
The BLM needs to develop an Integrated Pest Management Control Plan with a strong emphasis on Biological Control. The Nez Perce Tribe has taken a lead position in the development of Biological Control. I would like to see the BLM working with the Nez Perce Tribe in expanding this important alternative.	X			
Identify noxious weeds/exotic plants; discuss the magnitude and occurrence of the weed infestations, and strategies for prevention, early detection, and control procedures for weed management. Promote integrated weed management, with mitigation to avoid herbicide transport to surface or ground waters.	X			
The BLM needs to work closer with the US Forest Service. You must work together and right now you don't! With the age old problem of logging in general not happening, the BLM and Forest Service must work together, identify the dying timber problem and attack the beetle in a selective logging method that you all must come up with.	X			
We are concerned with survival, and opportunity to thrive, for native plants, especially sensitive and rare plants. This involves maintaining habitat for these populations and the larger community with which they interact. As much as possible, lands which closely resemble those found before logging and managing for timber production will best nurture sensitive plants. Prior to any use of BLM lands for extractive purposes (mining, grazing, timber production) we encourage botanical surveys of the land to be impacted.	X			

Table 3-1
Planning Classification for Comments Regarding Vegetation Management *(continued)*

Comment	Planning Classification ¹			
	A	B	C	D
Acquire more money to fight weeds.				X

¹ Comments are classified as follows:

A – will be addressed/considered in the RMP

B – will be resolved through policy or administrative actions

C – are already being addressed or will be addressed independent of the RMP effort

D – determined to be beyond the scope of the RMP effort

Related Planning Issues

As discussed in Section 3.2 above, the following planning issues are related to Vegetation Management and will be used to develop RMP alternatives:

1. How will the problem of invasive plant species be addressed?
2. How will forest vegetation be managed to attain desired stand structure and/or meet the range of natural variability?

3.3.2 Fire Management

Vegetation fuel types in the Cottonwood Field Office can be described as grass and timber. Vegetation in north-central Idaho has typically been burned by fires with mixed severity and a return interval of 35 to 100 years (longer in the higher elevation forest types). The past 90 years of successful fire exclusion, advancement of succession in forest ecosystems, and extended fire return intervals in short-grass prairie canyon lands have resulted in increased fuel loadings. When added to the significant outbreaks of insects and disease in forested areas, and increasing non-native plants in the canyon grasslands, the result is higher potentials for increased fire size, frequency, intensity, and severity. The influx of people to the area continues to increase the probability of human-caused fires.

Preparation Plan Preliminary Issues/Planning Questions

The following preliminary issue questions were identified by the BLM in the Preparation Plan for the issue theme, Fire Management:

? What should be the landscape level fire management goals and objectives?

? How can fire suppression actions be managed to minimize the adverse effects to resources while providing public health and safety and protecting private property?

? Where can fuel management activities be used to reduce fuel accumulations in the wildland-urban interface and promote and sustain a healthy ecosystem?

? What are the appropriate management goals and objectives for prescribed fires and naturally occurring wildfire in a scattered land ownership pattern?

Public Comment Summary

Public comments regarding fire management focused on several issues including restoration from fire damage, management of wildland-urban interfaces, the effects of smoke on health and aesthetic resources, and removal of dead and dying timber to reduce fuel loads. An updated fire management plan was requested (a plan is currently under development in conjunction with RMP). There was also a request from a representative of the US Environmental Protection Agency to integrate the National Fire Plan policies into the RMP.

Table 3-2
Planning Classification for Comments Regarding Fire Management

Comment	Planning Classification ¹			
	A	B	C	D
Restoration of Fire - The RMP should include an analysis of restoration of fire to BLM lands. This should include identification of areas which (1) will allow prescribed natural fire, (2) areas where the BLM will prescribe its own burning policy, and (3) areas where suppression will be employed; with appropriate social and ecological justification.	X			
Use of prescribed fire - All agencies involved should be looking for other alternatives that reduce the amount of smoke. Smoke is bad for our health, the scenic beauty of our state and recreation users. A few years ago the gov't put all the little sawmills out of business.	X			
Cut dead and dying timber to manage fire potential and create jobs.	X			
Consider a plan to use BLM for fire suppression rather than IDL.				X
A comprehensive fire management plan should be developed for the planning area and should include the identification of the threats imposed by hazardous fuel situations. BLM should define the appropriate management response to fires taking into account protection of objects and resources. Emergency fire rehabilitation protocols should also be developed and must be consistent with the protection of the area's objects, resources and objectives.	X			
Integrate National Fire Plan direction, including restoring more natural fire disturbance regimes to forest ecosystems, and evaluation of role of fire and other natural disturbance processes (e.g., insects, disease) & ecosystem processes (e.g., flows, cycles of nutrients & water) and their dynamics in developing revised direction for vegetation and fuels management.	X			
Discuss "Cohesive Strategy for Protecting People and Sustaining Resources in Fire-Adapted Ecosystems" and implications for increased prescribed burning, and "Interim Air Quality Policy on Wildland and Prescribed Fires," and identify participation in Idaho State Airshed Group to minimize air quality impacts of prescribed fire.	X			

Table 3-2
Planning Classification for Comments Regarding Fire Management (*continued*)

Comment	Planning Classification ¹			
	A	B	C	D
US Environmental Protection Agency recommends focusing fuels management in wildland-urban interfaces, and areas of high and severe fire risk, and evaluation of water quality, fisheries, wildlife impacts of fuels management to reduce fire risk vs. risk of and effects of potential wildfire.	X			

¹ Comments are classified as follows:

A – will be addressed/considered in the RMP

B – will be resolved through policy or administrative actions

C – are already being addressed or will be addressed independent of the RMP effort

D – determined to be beyond the scope of the RMP effort

Related Planning Issue

As discussed in Section 3.2 above, the following planning issue applies to Fire Management and will be used to develop RMP alternatives:

2. How will forest vegetation be managed to attain desired stand structure and/or meet the range of natural variability?
4. Where and what types of fuels reduction will be implemented to reduce risk to the public, firefighters, property, and natural and cultural resources?

3.3.3 Habitat Management for Wildlife and Special Status Species

The planning area contains important habitats for a variety of fish and wildlife species. Habitat has been modified as a result of road construction, timber harvesting, livestock grazing, wildfire, and fire suppression. Where public land ownership patterns are highly fragmented, protection and/or improvement of fish and wildlife habitats is more challenging. The key to maintaining fish and wildlife habitats is diverse, healthy vegetation and plant communities and good water quality, stream channel, and riparian conditions.

Special status species include plant, and animal species designated as endangered, threatened, or proposed under the Endangered Species Act or as BLM sensitive species. The planning area supports habitat for a number of federally listed and BLM sensitive species. Habitats for special status species have been affected by roads, timber sales, livestock grazing, wildfire suppression, off-highway vehicle (OHV) use, and habitat fragmentation.

Preparation Plan Preliminary Issues/Planning Questions

The following preliminary issue questions were identified by the BLM in the Preparation Plan for the issue theme, Habitat Management for Wildlife and Special Status Species:

? How will management of BLM lands affect the social and economic resiliency and sustainability of local economies?

? How will uses and activities be managed to maintain and/or improve fish and wildlife habitats in a scattered land ownership pattern?

? How will the BLM manage uses and activities to protect special status species and their habitats?

Public Comment Summary

Public comments pertaining to the management of habitat for wildlife and special status species were comprehensive in scope. The BLM was encouraged to work closely with the Forest Service, the Nez Perce Tribe, and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. There were many concerns regarding habitat and wildlife protection and restoration, water quality degradation (pertaining to these effects on watershed species and their habitats), livestock and grazing effects on aquatic habitats, the effects of vegetation management on wildlife sustainability, and roadway impacts to neighboring habitats.

Table 3-3
Planning Classification for Comments Regarding
Habitat Management for Wildlife and Special Status Species

Comment	Planning Classification ¹			
	A	B	C	D
To protect all habitats, and to preserve protection for all species with a streams conservation plan, and to defend riparian areas and wetlands.	X			
Please maintain comprehensive science-based protection for the natural plant, animal, mineral and hydraulic elements endemic to the Lolo Creek drainage.	X			
The effect on riparian vegetation, fisheries, and adjacent wildlife from the use of the Salmon River by motorized boats should be studied and addressed. Some areas along the river show the adverse effects of wave action on riparian vegetation and associated wildlife habitat.	X			
The protection of wetlands and riparian areas are vital to maintain healthy watersheds, to protect habitat of fish and wildlife and the drinking water supply for area residents.	X			
Habitat Management - The Craig Mountain area is an exceptional wildlife area producing herds of elk, whitetail and mule deer, turkeys, chukar and grouse - just to name a few. These lands should be managed with the emphases on habitat protection working in conjunction with the Idaho Fish and Game Department and the Nez Perce Tribe. The Lower Salmon and Lolo Creek are important salmon and steelhead habitat.	X			

Table 3-3
Planning Classification for Comments Regarding
Habitat Management for Wildlife and Special Status Species *(continued)*

Comment	Planning Classification ¹			
	A	B	C	D
Our triangular parcel occupies the majority of an ancient river bar and is bounded on two sides by BLM lands. We have a BLM permit for access and utilities to the property and a joint elk management agreement for winter range which includes most of our land and about 10 acres of BLM lands. This has been a five year on-going program with financial support from both BLM and the Natural Resource Conservation Service. It has entailed elk fence construction to limit grazing to deep winter, noxious weed management and range developed to permanent grasses.			X	
Land abuses by traditional livestock exists on isolated BLM lands, causing undesirable impacts to riparian zones and desert plant communities. I know that fencing and livestock management are contentious issues, but they need to be addressed in the RMP.	X			
A major issue that has been neglected is water quality. Much of the Cottonwood area is crucial habitat for TES fish species. Water quality and fish habitat must be major issues in this revision. They are crucial to treaty rights.	X			
In addition to weeds, other exotic species should be addressed. They have impacts on native species. Exotics include certain fish species, plants like crested wheatgrass, and terrestrial species like turkeys and chukar.	X			
Habitat management for wildlife and special status species should also reflect habitat protection. The manipulation paradigm is not appropriate in many instances.	X			
Monitoring needs to be addressed. A monitoring plan should be developed.	X			
Idaho Rivers United represents over 2,800 members, many of whom utilize the Cottonwood Resource Area for hiking, boating, fishing and other recreational and scientific pursuits. Idaho Rivers United's mission is to protect and restore the biological integrity of Idaho's rivers. Members and staff of IRU have a particular concern for restoring water quality and native fish habitat in the Salmon and Clearwater drainages, and were active participants in the development of the TMDL for the South Fork Clearwater River and the draft State Comprehensive Basin Plan.	X			
In the current plan how are the following issues addressed: rare and sensitive plants, weed control, riparian protection and restoration, and regulating commercial harvesting of non-timber resources? What are the rankings of stream health on BLM lands? More importantly, how will these issues be addressed in the Resource Management Plan under development?	X			
Project areas with unique resource values, particularly population strongholds and key refuges for listed or proposed species and narrow endemic populations.	X			

Table 3-3
Planning Classification for Comments Regarding
Habitat Management for Wildlife and Special Status Species *(continued)*

Comment	Planning Classification ¹			
	A	B	C	D
Protect high quality waters, riparian areas, wetlands, and aquatic species, including development of riparian protection guidelines to protect water quality and riparian areas and gain recovery of native fish populations (e.g., INFISH riparian protection guidelines).	X			
Reduce road impacts to water quality, fisheries and wildlife, identify road network needed for access and management which can be adequately maintained within budgets and capabilities; close/decommission roads that can't be maintained; minimize new roads; identify existing road conditions that cause or contribute to nonpoint source pollution/stream impairment, and promote conduct of necessary road maintenance to correct deficiencies, and reduce nonpoint source pollution from roads.	X			
Retain adequate snags and woody debris for wildlife habitat and necessary ecological structure and functioning (e.g., soil productivity, nutrient cycling, etc.).	X			
Maintain and restore degraded wildlife habitats, evaluating road management, habitat characteristics, security, displacement, fragmentation, connectivity, wildlife movement corridors, forest openings, edge effects, and promote threatened and endangered (T&E) and sensitive species recovery.	X			
On all lands jointly managed with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game continue to make wildlife the first priority.	X			
Land use plans must also be scientifically defensible. In developing land use plans, agencies must use a "systematic interdisciplinary approach to achieve integrated consideration of physical, biological, economic, and other sciences." 43 US Code § 1712(c)(2).	X			
A November 2001 study by the Western Native Trout Campaign found that of the 14 subspecies of native cutthroat remaining in the Western US, virtually all of them now occupy less than 5 percent of their historic range (Kessler et al., 2001). The study concluded that poorly maintained roads, along with non-native species introductions, were the primary culprits responsible for these precipitous and widespread declines.	X			
In addition to finding that roads were a major threat to native fish, the study also found that most of the best remaining strongholds for native fish were located in roadless areas. Protection of the BLM's Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) is key to aquatic recovery and protections.			X	

¹ Comments are classified as follows:

A – will be addressed/considered in the RMP

B – will be resolved through policy or administrative actions

C – are already being addressed or will be addressed independent of the RMP effort

D – determined to be beyond the scope of the RMP effort

Related Planning Issues

As discussed in Section 3.2 above, the following planning issues are related to Habitat Management for Wildlife and Special Status Species and will be used to develop RMP alternatives:

3. How will special status species and their habitats be managed?

3.3.4 Management of Transportation, Public Access, and Recreational Opportunities

Many tracts of public land, large and small, within the planning area have no legal access for the public. Population growth, rural and urban development, and increasing recreational activity have resulted in an increased need for access to BLM lands. If landowners are willing and funding is available, the BLM can negotiate and purchase easements for public access.

The Department of Interior's Strategic Plan calls for ensuring environmentally sound public access to recreation sites on public lands. The goal of improving access to appropriate recreation opportunities is also one of the BLM's recreation and visitor service priorities.

All-terrain vehicle (ATV) and OHV use has grown tremendously in popularity. However, ATV trail opportunities are limited in the planning unit because most of the trails on public lands are single track routes. The BLM has initiated a new National Off-Highway Vehicle Management Strategy and National Mountain Bicycling Strategic Action Plan for improving the way the road and trail systems are managed on public lands. These strategies provide a foundation for the development of a comprehensive travel management program.

The planning area contains a number of utility, transportation, and communication rights-of-way. The locations of some of these existing rights-of-way may or may not be suitable for expansion into utility corridors, communication sites, and/or wind energy sites. It is important to identify or delineate those corridors and sites in order to effectively manage the public lands and to minimize the impacts from the proliferation of separate rights-of-way.

Public lands provide for a wide array of recreation activity opportunities within varied settings. Water-based forms of recreation such as boating and fishing are very popular within the planning area. Outdoor recreation use levels in both developed and undeveloped recreation settings are increasing rapidly, with the increasing demand for commercially permitted activities. Increased use creates user conflicts and an elevated demand for facilities, user information, and access. There are currently three Special Recreation Management Areas in the planning area.

Preparation Plan Preliminary Issues/Planning Questions

The following preliminary issue questions were identified by the BLM in the Preparation Plan for the issue theme, Management of Transportation, Public Access, and Recreation Opportunities:

? What lands will be available for right-of-way corridors, and what are the limitations on further development of existing utility, transportation, and communication rights-of-way?

? How will transportation and public access be managed to improve access, protect resources, reduce user conflicts, and provide motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities for public land visitors?

? How will management of BLM lands affect the social and economic resiliency and sustainability of local economies?

? How will resources be managed to enhance recreation experiences and quality of life?

Public Comment Summary

Public comments received pertaining to topics of transportation, public access, or recreation were divided. Many respondents were concerned that the BLM's land use planning may diminish accessibility to public lands or the public's right to recreate at the same level as has been practiced in the past. Other concerned citizens' comments focused on the needs to restrict these rights to prioritize environmental stewardship and habitat protection and restoration. Many comments directly contradicted each other, in which cases the BLM will need to decipher between priorities in specific areas. In general, the public comments suggest undertaking a thorough evaluation to determine ways to balance environmental stewardship and habitat protection with recreational and access needs of the local area.

Table 3-4
Planning Classification for Comments Regarding
Management of Transportation, Public Access, and Recreation Opportunities

Comment	Planning Classification ¹			
	A	B	C	D
I am interested in how public access will be managed through this process. What affect will the RMP have on gathering miscellaneous forest products, particularly firewood? What will the effects be on recreational mining?	X			
I am interested in how public access will be managed through this process. Will off road use be permitted/restricted? To what extent and where? Will there be different restrictions for summer and winter use?	X			

Table 3-4
Planning Classification for Comments Regarding
Management of Transportation, Public Access, and Recreation Opportunities *(continued)*

Comment	Planning Classification ¹			
	A	B	C	D
In the Lewiston focus group, we asked "What do you believe is the greatest outdoor recreation need in this region (unmet needs)?" Our focus group participants said that the need for more accessible public open spaces with trail connectivity to be included in urban planning and using the varied attributes of the area to create a regional destination resort were two issues that needed to be addressed.	X			
Maintenance of access to land via river at all times of years should be considered. This is the only access to this and most private land.	X			
The effect on riparian vegetation, fisheries, and adjacent wildlife from the use of the Salmon River by motorized boats should be studied and addressed. Some areas along the river show the adverse effects of wave action on riparian vegetation and associated wildlife habitat.	X			
Idaho Rivers United represents over 2,800 members, many of whom utilize the Cottonwood Resource Area for hiking, boating, fishing and other recreational and scientific pursuits. Idaho Rivers United's mission is to protect and restore the biological integrity of Idaho's rivers. Members and staff of IRU have a particular concern for restoring water quality and native fish habitat in the Salmon and Clearwater drainages, and were active participants in the development of the TMDL for the South Fork Clearwater River and the draft State Comprehensive Basin Plan.	X			
Develop a plan, including enforcement action, to eliminate trespass by off-highway vehicles (OHVs) in lands identified as sensitive for soil erosion, wildlife values or nonmotorized recreation.	X			
Off-road vehicle and snowmobile use should occur only on designated roads. Weed spread is a major problem in the area, especially in the Salmon River drainage.	X			
Continue to provide enforcements river patrols on the Salmon. Increase funding and presence of BLM on the river; without the use of jet boats.	X			
Are there any roadless areas in this RMP. Lolo Creek in Clearwater County has excellent non-motorized recreation potential. Are there others? Maybe near the Snake River or Craig Mountains?	X			
One big transportation issue is wildlife (safe) corridors through roaded habitat, especially with Idaho Transportation Department.	X			
I am mostly concerned that all BLM land have good open access to the public. Too much BLM land in the west is shutout to the public by private land blocking its access.	X			
Our agency will be most interested in those portions of the Cottonwood RMP that would/may impact General Aviation operations in the area.	X			

Table 3-4
Planning Classification for Comments Regarding
Management of Transportation, Public Access, and Recreation Opportunities *(continued)*

Comment	Planning Classification ¹			
	A	B	C	D
As a private citizen I am concerned about the locking up of access to public lands. BLM has the purpose of managing public lands for the public. That is me. Too many of the people making the decisions regarding use of these lands within the agency have been considering the human species as a scourge upon the land, hence, lock it up. Keeping roads open to public use is in the interest of all, and restrictions which allow access only to the young "right kind" of people is [expletive deleted], let alone the lost access from road obliteration which hampers fire suppression.	X			
To study the impacts of off-road vehicles and snowmobiles with a program to promote solitude.	X			
In addition to finding that roads were a major threat to native fish, the study also found that most of the best remaining strongholds for native fish were located in roadless areas. Protection of the BLM's WSAs is key to aquatic recovery and protections.			X	
The RMP should allow no motorized use in the Field Offices WSAs.			X	
Roadless Lands - BLM should establish roadless lands as a very high priority in BLM's work on the Cottonwood District. It has been demonstrated time and again that roadless lands are incredibly important for healthy wildlife and fisheries populations. In terms of ecological benefits, roadless areas provide (1) relatively intact wildlands, (2) essential habitat for many native species and communities at risk, (3) important water resources, (4) "buffer areas" from exotic species invasions and edge effects, (5) strongholds for native aquatic biota, (6) critical range for ungulates and other species, and (7) landscape and regional connectivity. While not all conservative goals can be achieved by protecting remaining roadless areas, they do provide an extremely important foundation.	X			
I would like to recommend that the BLM view the ATV activity as a positive use of our public land. My observation of damage caused by ATVs has been grossly exaggerated. In planning ATV trails, we must remember this is a family adventure, with young and elderly involved, should not be made hazardous with high barriers or unnecessarily deep water bars that could be a safety factor. At least a 100 ft corridor should be allowed so people can park/picnic/camp/hunt etc. The new routes constructed should provide access to rivers/lakes/streams scenic and historic places just as the hikers and horsemen enjoy. I don not own an ATV, but wish they were available when my family was young.			X	
At least a 100 ft corridor should be allowed so people can park/picnic/camp/hunt etc. The new routes constructed should provide access to rivers/lakes/streams scenic and historic places just as the hikers and horsemen enjoy.			X	
Map and inventory all roads and trails. Expand the network of roads/trails to enhance recreation opportunities. Link roads/trails to create loops.			X	

Table 3-4
Planning Classification for Comments Regarding
Management of Transportation, Public Access, and Recreation Opportunities *(continued)*

Comment	Planning Classification ¹			
	A	B	C	D
Public Access - The RMP should address the issue of maintaining and enhancing public access to the Salmon River and tributaries. I have noted that as the riparian corridor has become more developed by home construction, access to the river corridor has become more difficult and constrained. These new homeowners seem to "bend" their right on private property and extend it to public property. The widest possible access should be maintained for all users of this public resource.	X			
Use of Public Lands - The Cottonwood RMP study area has undergone significant change in the last 20 years. Going from an economy based on the predominate uses of farming and ranching, mining, and timber production area, to an economy now including: use of the river corridor by various water users, 3-season tourist utilization, and an area utilized for second homes and retirement. The Cottonwood RMP area can and should continue to be a provider of grazing, mining, and timber resources. But this use must be consistent and compatible with other public values and realities. My family enjoys this area immensely, and doesn't want to see the traditional local economy go away. In turn, private and public land use practices need to be held up to the light of today's public values and commitments to resource preservation and enhancement.	X			
A comprehensive and enforceable off-road vehicle management plan, which should include no new areas be open for off-road vehicles.	X			
Transportation - I am very concerned about the proliferation of off-road vehicles in the region. There are many responsible users of these vehicles but some aren't and go mudbogging through riparian and wetland areas and also cut trails on steep slopes causing severe erosion problems.	X			
All these areas should be closed to motor vehicles, withdrawn from mineral entry, closed to mineral leasing, and remain unroaded and not be open to logging.	X			
The RMP must include scientifically based standards dictating when new road construction will be allowed, where they should be constructed, and when roads should be decommissioned. It should include an objective set of criteria with which the BLM should evaluate every proposal for new road construction. The evaluation criteria should include whether the proposal is in an environmentally sensitive area, such as a riparian area, unroaded area, or steep slope. It should also include whether the road is needed, not just in the short-term, whether there are alternative access routes or methods, and whether the BLM has sufficient funds to maintain additional roads.	X			

Table 3-4
Planning Classification for Comments Regarding
Management of Transportation, Public Access, and Recreation Opportunities *(continued)*

Comment	Planning Classification ¹			
	A	B	C	D
Recreation opportunities for visitor exploration and discovery should focus on activities in an undeveloped, primitive setting. BLM should be specific in identifying the uses that will be acceptable and allowable in certain and designated areas and settings. BLM should manage overnight camping and backcountry use to prevent impacts to resources. BLM should identify seasonal or permanent restrictions on backcountry use and camping to avoid damage to sensitive resources. Recreational collecting of objects should be prohibited, unless expressly permitted for specific items from specific locations. Competitive events should be limited or prohibited on BLM land in these landscapes. Other areas may be identified for these events, including private property. BLM should be very cautious in issuing special use permits for recreational or commercial purposes. Certain permitted uses should be required to pay for the monitoring necessary to make sure they are compliant with the terms of their use and prevent unnecessary resource damage. This may even include paying for a BLM staff person to accompany the group in their activities. BLM should also incorporate a cost analysis and cost recovery program into the issuance of special use permits. Such uses should be required to post bonds for unintended resource damage and restoration. Special uses should also pay for the costs of the BLM to administer and monitor their uses, including staff time in evaluation and processing of the permit.	X			
Through this planning process the BLM should designate a transportation network that retains the minimum amount of routes necessary to provide for reasonable access. Extraneous, duplicative, unstable or little used routes should be closed, decommissioned and rehabilitated. Existing routes should not be upgraded and no new routes should be constructed, unless for relocation purposes to protect resource damage. The BLM should establish maintenance agreements with the county, state, and/or road districts to conduct their road maintenance in the least impacting ways possible. A detailed monitoring plan should be developed and implemented to track and address increased impacts from motorized use associated.	X			
Lands administered by the Cottonwood Field Office must be immediately closed to all cross-country indiscriminate travel. Motorized travel must be limited to designated roads and trails only. Motorized vehicle use must not be allowed in areas with sensitive or highly erodible soils, or at times of the year when soil conditions are inappropriate for such use. Off-road vehicle use must be designed to encourage the safety and protection of all public land users. Such use must be eliminated from sensitive areas and areas identified for the protection of biological, geological, paleontological, cultural and other resource values. The BLM must develop a travel plan and associated maps and educational materials for recreational motorized use. Enforcement of the regulations must be a top priority for the BLM. Designated routes should be established and the BLM should establish routes as being closed unless posted open.	X			

Table 3-4
Planning Classification for Comments Regarding
Management of Transportation, Public Access, and Recreation Opportunities *(continued)*

Comment	Planning Classification ¹			
	A	B	C	D
BLM should work to assure public access to public lands in areas with no resource conflicts or impacts. The BLM should incorporate into any grazing and other types of permitted uses a stipulation of keeping access routes open for the public, even if they cross private lands. If resource users want to continue to use the public lands for their economic benefit, then the public has a right to use roads that cross their private property to access public lands.	X			
Access to our public lands is a hot issue. The Kinnikinnick Chapter does not believe the BLM needs to provide access for all the machines and transportation modes available today, beyond some of those already open. People always have access by foot -- sometimes it may be difficult and distant, but we are not fenced out. The limitations are those of individual time available, physical condition and age. You are not a transportation department with responsibility for roadway access everywhere. Forest health and that of its wildlife and flora components should be given higher priority. All vehicles should stay on established roadways, not travel "cross country."	X			
Control and direct OHV use to protect resources (i.e., wildlife habitat and security) and prevent erosion, including adequate policing and enforcing.	X			
Continue to aggressively purchase land or scenic easements to protect land in the Salmon River corridor for public access. Provide access to landlocked BLM lands, by rule or trade, for lands with access.	X			
Open no additional miles or acreage for OHV use.	X			
Bring the Clearwater River into the realm of the BLM controlled rivers. Permit all commercial users. Direct all fees collected to "improvements" on the river.	X			
As owners of property (8 acres and home) adjacent to BLM lands, our main concerns are continued access to our property, as we use a BLM-owned road.	X			

¹ Comments are classified as follows:

A – will be addressed/considered in the RMP

B – will be resolved through policy or administrative actions

C – are already being addressed or will be addressed independent of the RMP effort

D – determined to be beyond the scope of the RMP effort

Related Planning Issues

As discussed in Section 3.2 above, the following planning issues are related to Management of Transportation, Public Access, and Recreation Opportunities and will be used to develop RMP alternatives:

5. How will motorized and nonmotorized travel be managed to provide access, while minimizing impacts to natural and cultural resources?
8. How will public land resources be managed in scattered and/or isolated parcels, given varied resource values and priorities?

9. How will existing and future demand for recreation on public lands be addressed?

3.3.5 Land Tenure Adjustments

The workload and cost to manage BLM lands within the planning area are high because of the scattered land ownership pattern. Many parcels are less than 80 acres, have no legal access, and contain limited management opportunities. Land tenure adjustments through purchase, exchange, and donation have the potential to provide greater management efficiency, reduced workload, and reduced costs. It also allows for the acquisition of parcels with high public resource values.

Preparation Plan Preliminary Issues/Planning Questions

The following preliminary issue question was identified by the BLM in the Preparation Plan for the issue theme, Land Tenure Adjustments:

? What opportunities exist to make adjustments to public land ownership that would result in greater management efficiency and increased public and natural resource benefits?

Public Comment Summary

The scattered land ownership pattern is not only a concern of the BLM, but also the public. They have asked that the BLM address this issue in order to make land management for this and other agencies—as well as private land owners and visitors to the properties—easier and less expensive to taxpayers. Conversely, the retention of small parcels that provide valuable access or recreational opportunities has been requested. The BLM will identify these small parcels and consider them separately in order to develop a management plan that is beneficial to all parties.

Table 3-5
Planning Classification for Comments Regarding Land Tenure Adjustments

Comment	Planning Classification ¹			
	A	B	C	D
I'd like the plan to seriously address land consolidation through exchange. Our two agencies, in particular, have a lot to gain in saving administrative time and money if we work together to block up our scattered parcels.	X			
For a temporary government agency set up to dispose of surplus lands the BLM has persisted for a long time. In my opinion the BLM should get back on track and complete this task: wildly scattered lands makes management difficult at best and very expensive to the taxpayers. Recent joint EIS work with the USFS is a step in the right direction but disposal of lands would be best. I see part of these lands used in the water rights case as trading stock. Other land transferred to the USFS, US Park Service, Idaho Fish and Game, Idaho schools, local towns and cities or sold at auction a little at a time to the high bidder to be placed on the tax rolls.	X			

Table 3-5
Planning Classification for Comments Regarding Land Tenure Adjustments *(continued)*

Comment	Planning Classification ¹			
	A	B	C	D
The Cottonwood Field Office's lands are scattered in numerous parcels throughout North Central Idaho. The BLM has been working to consolidate its lands in the Field Office. While this is an important land management tool, small parcels of land that provide valuable access or recreational opportunities should be retained.	X			
Land Exchanges and the RMP - The Cottonwood Field Office is made up of a very mixed land ownership pattern. One only has to look at the Interagency Visitor/Travel Map to see that this is true. Forest Service, BLM, State of Idaho and Private lands are intermingled together, making land management (or protection) hard in some cases. To deal with this problem the BLM and Forest Service have chosen to utilize land trades and land purchases to try to solve some of the intermingled ownership pattern. Land exchanges can be beneficial if they are done with a holistic approach that protects the public interest and ecological values of the area. BLM has conducted some good exchanges, but also engaged in transactions that required they exchange lands that should have been left in federal ownership. The Cottonwood Field Office has a great opportunity at this time to strengthen the land exchange and purchase program and outline which lands they can afford to trade away and which lands must stay in public ownership. BLM should prioritize lands that would be beneficial to acquire and lands that if they were disposed of would have little impact. BLM should also look at the Rawlins Field Office's (Wyoming BLM) Land Exchange Criteria document that was created for the Great Divide RMP. It is a good example of how to prioritize lands for both acquisition and disposal.	X			
BLM should utilize American Wildlands' Corridors of Life mapping to help you to determine where wildlife migration corridors are in the analysis area. These are critical lands to keep in public ownership.	X			
Lands to Acquire: The Handbook also guides which lands should be prioritized for acquisition.	X			
Sell odd lots parcels less than 100 acres to existing lease holders to help minimize time consumption of BLM employees on bits and pieces of acreage.	X			
Study land exchange with the Nez Perce Tribe.	X			
Continue to aggressively purchase land or scenic easements to protect land in the Salmon River corridor for public access. Provide access to landlocked BLM lands, by rule or trade, for lands with access.	X			
Coordination between the BLM and the Forest Service is crucial as most of these areas are adjacent to or surrounded by national forest. It may be that land transfers between the two agencies are advisable for scattered tracts.	X			

¹ Comments are classified as follows:

A – will be addressed/considered in the RMP

B – will be resolved through policy or administrative actions

C – are already being addressed or will be addressed independent of the RMP effort

D – determined to be beyond the scope of the RMP effort

Related Planning Issue

As discussed in Section 3.2 above, the following planning issue is related to Land Tenure Adjustments and will be used to develop RMP alternatives:

8. How will public land resources be managed in scattered and/or isolated parcels, given varied resource values and priorities?

3.3.6 Availability and Management of Public Lands for Commercial Uses

A very high economic priority for the local communities of north-central Idaho is the recreation and tourism on public lands, particularly those associated with rivers and lakes. Commercial outfitting, guide businesses, and recreational fishing associated with the salmon and steelhead fisheries are factors influencing the local economy. Forest health concerns, including emphasis on fuels management in the wildland-urban interface, continue to increase the importance of extracting timber products from public lands, thus creating jobs within local communities.

Livestock grazing in the Cottonwood Field Office consists mainly of scattered parcels surrounded by private lands. The BLM has authorized grazing on these allotments to meet the public demand for livestock grazing, and to retain administrative access to these scattered parcels. The Cottonwood FO currently authorizes grazing on 155 grazing allotments.

The planning area has potential for the discovery of locatable minerals, geothermal energy, and salable minerals. Mineral and energy development can affect a variety of other resources, although these effects can be reduced through carefully developed mitigations such as reclamation, containment of hazardous materials associated with mineral and energy development, and avoidance areas. In addition to the mineral and energy development activities, there are concerns about abandoned mine lands and the hazard abatement associated with such activities. This ongoing process involves the BLM and other federal and state agencies.

Preparation Plan Preliminary Issues/Planning Questions

The following preliminary issue questions were identified by the BLM in the Preparation Plan for the issue theme, Management of Public Lands for Commercial Uses:

- ? How will management of BLM lands affect the social economic resiliency and sustainability of local economies?
- ? Where and at what harvest levels will the BLM provide for forest products?
- ? Given land ownership patterns, where will livestock grazing be authorized and how will it be managed?

? How will mineral and energy development activities be managed to provide for projects while protecting other natural resources?

Public Comment Summary

Public comments related to the Commercial Uses of Public Lands were split between those who supported commercial land uses to provide for economic sustainability, including forestry, timber production, livestock grazing, and mining, and those who are concerned about the effects of commercial uses on neighboring properties. Several comments were received in support of the BLM's past method of managing public lands. Several specific recommendations were provided, which may be an implementation-level action and not specifically addressed in the RMP because it is a landscape-level management plan. These comments are appreciated, however, because many commercial activities have resulted in indirect impacts on the environment and require rectification in specific areas without planning area-wide mandates.

Table 3-6
Planning Classification for Comments Regarding
Availability and Management of Public Lands for Commercial Uses

Comment	Planning Classification ¹			
	A	B	C	D
The BLM needs to work closer with the US Forest Service. You must work together and right now you don't! I watch the dying timber move north from Forest Service acreage, across BLM acreage and now crossing over the private block along the North American River Drainage. With the age old problem of logging in general not happening, the BLM and Forest Service must work together, identify the dying timber problem and attack the beetle in a selective logging method that you all must come up with.	X			
... you should continue short term management of timber sales, grazing leases and other management activities. The "pink house" campground, boat launches, parking lots and recreation area is well done and maintained. Keep up the good work!	X			
Also, how do or will, mining claims on BLM land impact private property adjacent to it? An easy-to-read booklet, outlining the rights of homeowners whose land borders BLM lands, would be helpful.	X			
I am interested in seeing BLM land managed for the good of the public. Too much BLM land is allowed to be managed by ranchers and other private ("for profit") interests.	X			
Although there is typically little if any predator control work conducted on BLM-administered lands in the Cottonwood Field Office Planning Area, there may be occasional requests from livestock producers to control damage caused by coyotes, or wolves, black bears or mountain lions. With expanding wolf populations in Idaho, the likelihood of wolf/livestock conflicts is increasing. Alternatives being considered during this process should recognize and provide allowances for the need to conduct predator control for protection of livestock.	X			

Table 3-6
Planning Classification for Comments Regarding
Availability and Management of Public Lands for Commercial Uses *(continued)*

Comment	Planning Classification ¹			
	A	B	C	D
Please maintain comprehensive science-based protection for the natural plant, animal, mineral and hydraulic elements endemic to the Lolo Creek drainage.	X			
Timber Sales - You are to be commended for doing an excellent job and have contributed much to the Idaho County economy. During times of Forest Service lock down, your policy is good regarding the removal of burned timber before its quality is lost.	X			
Manage the timber with more timber sales to create jobs.	X			
Promote exploration and development of mineral to create jobs in remote areas and to retain the historic economic base.	X			
Streamline the regulatory process for utilization of the resources whether it is recreation, forestry or mining.	X			
Use of Public Lands - The Cottonwood RMP study area has undergone significant change in the last 20 years. Going from an economy based on the predominate uses of farming and ranching, mining, and timber production area, to an economy now including: use of the river corridor by various water users, 3-season tourist utilization, and an area utilized for second homes and retirement. The Cottonwood RMP area can and should continue to be a provider of grazing, mining, and timber resources. But this use must be consistent and compatible with other public values and realities. My family enjoys this area immensely, and doesn't want to see the traditional local economy go away. In turn, private and public land use practices need to be held up to the light of today's public values and commitments to resource preservation and enhancement.	X			
Fuels and Forest Management - I support selective cutting of BLM forests but in the Elk City area there are large areas of bug killed lodge pole pine that are creating a fire hazard and need to be addressed.	X			
Commercial Uses - I support commercial thinning and selective cutting of forest lands that maintain healthy forests while protecting watershed and wildlife. I oppose suction dredging (portable dredges) of rivers and streams. I am in favor of livestock grazing on public land but the carrying capacity of the grazing allotment (cow calf ratio per acre) must be adjusted to protect the sensitivities of the specific sights. Another area of concern is the over harvesting of wild herbs, plants and all other wild crafted area resources for commercial profit. As an example I have seen areas of bear grass along roads virtually wiped out by people harvesting for sale in floral arrangements. A permit system may need to be developed for commercial harvesters only.	X			
Land abuses by traditional livestock exists on isolated BLM lands, causing undesirable impacts to riparian zones and desert plant communities. I know that fencing and livestock management are contentious issues, but they need to be addressed in the RMP.	X			
All these areas should be closed to motor vehicles, withdrawn from mineral entry, closed to mineral leasing, and remain unroaded and not be open to logging.	X			

Table 3-6
Planning Classification for Comments Regarding
Availability and Management of Public Lands for Commercial Uses *(continued)*

Comment	Planning Classification ¹			
	A	B	C	D
Other issues deserve comment. Will the RMP do allocation and look at issues such as grazing (whether or not areas will be grazed by livestock), logging, mining, mineral leasing and such as suggested by preliminary issue #6 (Management of Public Lands for Commercial Uses)?	X			
Livestock grazing should be managed in a manner that will not harm the objects or resources that are of value and concern in these landscapes. BLM should ensure grazing conforms to the "Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration" by placing a priority on assessing areas to see if they are in compliance. If the areas are not in compliance, immediate action should be taken to rectify the grazing management. BLM should not allow intensive grazing management systems of any kind, whether off-stream or in upland locations. Grazing should be eliminated in riparian/wetland areas after the growing season. Grazing should also be eliminated from all riparian pastures where water quality standards are not met within a reasonable amount of time, suggested two years, for factors affected by livestock grazing (fecal coliform, turbidity, temperature, etc).	X			
In the current plan how are the following issues addressed: rare and sensitive plants, weed control, riparian protection and restoration, and regulating commercial harvesting of non-timber resources? What are the rankings of stream health on BLM lands? More importantly, how will these issues be addressed in the Resource Management Plan under development?	X			
Land use plans must also be scientifically defensible. In developing land use plans, agencies must use a "systematic interdisciplinary approach to achieve integrated consideration of physical, biological, economic, and other sciences." 43 US Code § 1712(c)(2).	X			

¹ Comments are classified as follows:

A – will be addressed/considered in the RMP

B – will be resolved through policy or administrative actions

C – are already being addressed or will be addressed independent of the RMP effort

D – determined to be beyond the scope of the RMP effort

Related Planning Issues

As discussed in Section 3.2 above, the following planning issues are related to Management of Public Lands for Commercial Uses and will be used to develop RMP alternatives:

5. At what levels will commercial uses (minerals, forest products, livestock grazing, and recreation) be authorized?

3.3.7 Management of Areas with Special Values

The planning area contains many significant prehistoric, historic, and traditional cultural properties. Recreational activities, unintentional trespass, theft, erosion, and vandalism are all sources of cultural resource degradation.

Protection of cultural resource sites may include identification, evaluation, monitoring, stabilization, and interpretation.

The planning area contains very few known paleontological sites and caves. These resources are only beginning to be understood and identified. Recreational activities, unintentional trespass, theft, and vandalism are all sources of resource degradation. Protection and management of these sites and caves includes identification, stabilization, and enhancement to maintain significant scientific, educational, and recreational values.

Range management, forestry, fuels management activities, and rights-of way for utility, transportation and communication facilities are the primary actions affecting visual resources in the planning area. The BLM is responsible for ensuring that the scenic values of public lands are considered in all proposed actions that may affect visual quality. The BLM manages the visual resource by identifying visual resource values, establishing objectives for managing those values, and taking action to achieve the visual management objectives.

The planning area contains a number of special designations such as Wilderness Study Areas (WSA), Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness, Research Natural Areas, ACECs, and National Historic Trails. These special designations provide management direction specifically designed to protect the resource values for which the area was designated. There may be resources that are best protected by additional designations, and there may be designations that are no longer necessary. In addition, the Lower Salmon River has been found eligible and suitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, has been recommended to Congress for designation, and is being managed under interim management guidelines until congressional action is taken.

Preparation Plan Preliminary Issues/Planning Questions

The following preliminary issue questions were identified by the BLM in the Preparation Plan for the issue theme, Management of Areas with Special Values:

- ? How will cultural resources needing proactive management, protection, and use be identified?
- ? How will sacred sites and traditional cultural places that need protection be identified?
- ? How will the BLM manage paleontological and cave resources?
- ? Where are the different visual resource values within the planning area, and what degree should they be protected?

? Where are special designations appropriate to protect unique resource values?

? What other rivers in the planning area are suitable for Wild and Scenic River status?

Public Comment Summary

Public comments pertaining to the Management of Areas with Special Value primarily encouraged the BLM to look at specific areas and reassess the general evaluation of areas for designation as ACECs, WSAs, or Wild and Scenic Rivers.

Table 3-7
Planning Classification for Comments Regarding
Management of Areas with Special Values

Comment	Planning Classification ¹			
	A	B	C	D
Special Values Area Management - I support Wild and Scenic River status for the Lower Salmon and Lower Lolo Creek. A Wild and Scenic River plan should be developed that keeps in mind the historical uses of the areas. Another special value area is watershed protection for Big Canyon Creek. It drains a large geographic area in the heart of the Nez Perce 1863 Reservation. The BLM has large land holdings on the Joseph Plains. This remote area has some of the best mule deer hunting in the state. The wildlife populations are abundant and healthy. Its streams flow into the Lower Salmon and Hells Canyon NRA watersheds. This region has special values that need protecting.	X			
We appreciate the preliminary issues identified for analysis in the plan revision. We are also encouraged by the fact that WSAs will continue to be managed for wilderness values. We feel that additions to the inventory of ACECs, WSAs and river and stream corridors to the Wild and Scenic Rivers System and warranted and appropriate.	X			
I urge that all roadless areas and unroaded areas be fully preserved and designated wilderness.				X
Roadless areas which may qualify for future, further protection should be maintained as roadless and qualifying for possible wilderness inclusion.	X			
In addition to finding that roads were a major threat to native fish, the study also found that most of the best remaining strongholds for native fish were located in roadless areas. Protection of the BLM's WSAs is key to aquatic recovery and protections.				X
The RMP should allow no motorized use in the Field Offices WSAs.			X	
The RMP needs to address wilderness. The existing WSAs do not include all areas that should have been studied. These other areas should be studied (section 202 FLPMA). Some of these areas may be smaller than 5,000 acres though they are continuous to roadless areas on other jurisdictions. All these areas should be closed to motor vehicles, withdrawn from mineral entry, closed to mineral leasing, and remain unroaded and not be open to logging.				X

Table 3-7
Planning Classification for Comments Regarding
Management of Areas with Special Values *(continued)*

Comment	Planning Classification ¹			
	A	B	C	D
BLM should establish goals to protect the unique and outstanding cultural, geologic, and paleontological resources of the land administered by the Cottonwood Field Office. The BLM should determine the sites or areas that are most vulnerable to current and future impact and adopt management actions necessary to protect and restore these resources. Specific management actions may include site stabilization, fencing, signing, closures, rehabilitation, increased monitoring or interpretative development, and measures should be adopted to protect these resources from artifact collectors, looters, thieves, and vandals. The Nez Perce and Coeur d'Alene Tribes should be engaged at every possible opportunity to determine site locations or particular concerns and their input on how to best protect their heritage and culture.	X			
The BLM should conduct current inventories on roadless areas within the Cottonwood Resource Area. FLPMA mandates that federal agencies maintain "an inventory of all public lands and their resource and other values." Keeping track of special resources, such as roadless areas, must be part of this inventory process. FLPMA mandates that this inventory "be kept current so as to reflect changes in conditions and to identify new and emerging resource and other values." 43 US Code 1711§ (a). Thus, the BLM cannot rely on outdated roadless area inventories for information on the amount of primitive lands within the Cottonwood Resource Area. This inventory should also include lands suitable for wilderness designation.				X
All treatment options must be considered to protect the wilderness resource values. The recreational use of contiguous wilderness leaves the area susceptible to introduction of harmful vegetative species. The project must be flexible enough to allow for a large treatment area. Recreational opportunities within the Cottonwood Field Office and the contiguous wilderness should be limited long term, however, by management objectives or treatment options.			X	
The geologic history of our parcel, BLM lands in the Salmon River Canyon in general is extremely interesting, and in my opinion, should be interpreted to the general public. Plate tectonics, continent shore lines, exotic terrains, basalt flows, massive loess deposits, and gigantic floods have all contributed to the shape and dimension of this dynamic area.	X			

Table 3-7
Planning Classification for Comments Regarding
Management of Areas with Special Values *(continued)*

Comment	Planning Classification ¹			
	A	B	C	D
BLM should identify any inventories needed to provide a basis for understanding the distribution, comparative importance, and potential uses of cultural, geologic and paleontological resources, relative sensitivity, relative opportunities for interpretive development, relative scientific importance, and relative potential for research and education. The BLM is no doubt aware of the extensive amount of information available on the historic, geologic, paleontological and cultural significance of many of the lands within the Cottonwood Field Office. Coordination and communication with the tribes, the State Historic Preservation Office, local historical societies, area universities and other sources of useful information is important during this planning process to identify and protect the vast array of significant resources present in these landscapes. The BLM should consider designating new Archaeological Districts and should seek designation of all sites eligible for protection as additions to the National Register of Historic Places.	X			
In addition to finding that roads were a major threat to native fish, the study also found that most of the best remaining strongholds for native fish were located in roadless areas. Protection of the BLM's WSAs is key to aquatic recovery and protections.			X	

¹ Comments are classified as follows:

A – will be addressed/considered in the RMP

B – will be resolved through policy or administrative actions

C – are already being addressed or will be addressed independent of the RMP effort

D – determined to be beyond the scope of the RMP effort

Related Planning Issues

No planning issues (Section 3.2) are directly related to Management of Areas with Special Values. However, special values will be considered during alternatives development and the overall planning process.

3.3.8 Tribal Treaty Rights and Trust Responsibilities

Sacred sites, cultural landscapes, traditional cultural use areas, and other trust resources within the planning unit require inventory, consultation, and protection to meet the BLM's trust responsibilities. Treaties ratified by Congress and federally recognized tribes confer special legal rights for tribal use of public land. Effective consultation and coordination is the key to achieving management goals for both the tribes and the BLM.

Preparation Plan Preliminary Issues/Planning Questions

The following preliminary issue questions were identified by the BLM in the Preparation Plan for the issue theme, Tribal Treaty Rights and Trust Responsibilities:

? Are potential effects to trust resources and treaty rights adequately addressed?

? What plants and animals in the planning area are typically used for traditional and/or treaty use purposes?

Public Comment Summary

Public comments related to Tribal Treaty Rights and Trust Responsibilities addressed special designations and commercial uses of lands adjacent to tribal lands that impact the traditional settings and uses of the land, vegetation, wildlife, and resources. Continued tribal consultation was encouraged.

Table 3-8
Planning Classification for Comments Regarding
Tribal Treaty Rights and Trust Responsibilities

Comment	Planning Classification ¹			
	A	B	C	D
Tribal Treaty Rights and Trust Responsibilities - Another area of concern is the harvesting of wild roots, berries and herbs on public land. I've had several Nez Perce tribal members express their concerns about individual harvesting and selling for profit traditional foods and herbs. This is a very sensitive area. Tribal members are very secretive about the locations of where their individual families gather. These areas need to be protected from over harvesting and commercial exploitation. The BLM needs to work closely with tribal members on this important matter.	X			
BLM should identify any inventories needed to provide a basis for understanding the distribution, comparative importance, and potential uses of cultural, geologic and paleontological resources, relative sensitivity, relative opportunities for interpretive development, relative scientific importance, and relative potential for research and education. The BLM is no doubt aware of the extensive amount of information available on the historic, geologic, paleontological and cultural significance of many of the lands within the Cottonwood Field Office. Coordination and communication with the tribes, the State Historic Preservation Office, local historical societies, area universities and other sources of useful information is important during this planning process to identify and protect the vast array of significant resources present in these landscapes. The BLM should consider designating new Archaeological Districts and should seek designation of all sites eligible for protection as additions to the National Register of Historic Places.	X			
Coordinate with Indian tribes and provide opportunities for meaningful tribal input.	X			
Water quality and fish habitat must be major issues in this revision. They are crucial to treaty rights.	X			

¹ Comments are classified as follows:

A – will be addressed/considered in the RMP

B – will be resolved through policy or administrative actions

C – are already being addressed or will be addressed independent of the RMP effort

D – determined to be beyond the scope of the RMP effort

Related Planning Issue

As discussed in Section 3.2 above, the following planning issue is related to Tribal Treaty Rights and Trust Responsibilities and will be used to develop RMP alternatives:

4. How will priority watersheds or areas be determined for conservation and/or restoration strategies?

3.3.9 Water Resources

Water resources were initially considered a part of habitat management for special status species; However, as a result of scoping, this topic has evolved into an important planning theme. Habitat management in watersheds is a concern of the public with a broader focus to restoration, water quality, and indirect effects from commercial and recreational activities.

The planning area contains a diversity of important habitats for a variety of fish and wildlife species. Aquatic habitat quality has been modified as a result of roads, timber harvest, wildfire, noxious weeds, and grazing. Where public lands ownership patterns are highly fragmented, protection and/or improvement of fish and wildlife habitats is more challenging. The key to maintaining fish and wildlife habitats is diverse, healthy vegetation and plant communities and good water quality, stream channel, and riparian conditions.

Preparation Plan Preliminary Issues/Planning Questions

The following preliminary issue question was identified by the BLM in the Preparation Plan for the issue theme, Water Resources:

? How will uses and activities be managed to maintain and/or improve water quality and fish and wildlife habitats in a scattered land ownership pattern?

Public Comment Summary

Several public comments were received pertaining to water quality and watershed restoration, which resulted in designation of a new planning theme to be considered during the planning process. Water quality degradation from commercial uses is a major concern, as the planning area includes many critical habitats for special status species. Watershed restoration was another big concern.

Table 3-9
Planning Classification for Comments Regarding
Water Resources

Comment	Planning Classification ¹			
	A	B	C	D
Water quality - Water quality can be greatly impacted by infestations of harmful nonindigenous weed species. Infiltration may be reduced and runoff increased in sites dominated by weeds such as Spotted Knapweed.	X			
Water Quality - Certain land practices in the RMP area contribute to water quality degradation in the Salmon River and tributary streams. As an incentive, if the same landowners are recipients of Federal or State grazing permits, then a condition of using public lands should be a curtailment of using the river systems to clean feedlots. This is essentially "point pollution." There are reasonable alternatives to clean a feedlot, rather than using a public resource (rivers) which creates undesirable third party impacts.	X			
All timber harvest and mining proposals should have no negative on water quality.	X			
Improve watershed/aquatic monitoring and assessment programs to identify impacts, detect problems, measure restoration success, and make changes to management based on monitoring (adaptive management), and address coordination efforts and budget needs for monitoring. Identify how monitoring will improve from the current plan.	X			
A major issue that has been neglected is water quality. Much of the Cottonwood area is crucial habitat for threatened and endangered species (TES) fish species. Water quality and fish habitat must be major issues in this revision. They are crucial to treaty rights.	X			
Water developments should only be allowed where it is the only method to protect resources. New and additional water developments and diversions should be very limited. Existing water developments and diversions should be assessed for their overall impact on resources and should not be allowed to dewater springs, seeps or streams. BLM should remove or relocate water developments where they are causing harm and developments should not be allowed for the purpose of increasing livestock numbers.	X			
Promote watershed restoration to achieve water quality that fully supports beneficial uses in cooperation with State/US Environmental Protection Agency TMDL development and implementation efforts; link watershed proper functioning condition to water quality that fully supports beneficial uses.	X			
Reduce road impacts to water quality, fisheries and wildlife, identify road network needed for access and management which can be adequately maintained within budgets and capabilities; close/decommission roads that can't be maintained; minimize new roads; identify existing road conditions that cause or contribute to nonpoint source pollution/stream impairment, and promote conduct of necessary road maintenance to correct deficiencies, and reduce nonpoint source pollution from roads.	X			

¹ Comments are classified as follows:

A – will be addressed/considered in the RMP

B – will be resolved through policy or administrative actions

C – are already being addressed or will be addressed independent of the RMP effort

D – determined to be beyond the scope of the RMP effort

Related Planning Issue

As discussed in Section 3.2 above, the following planning issue is related to Water Resources and will be used to develop RMP alternatives:

4. How will priority watersheds or areas be determined for conservation and/or restoration strategies?

3.4 PUBLIC COMMENTS NOT APPLICABLE TO PLANNING THEMES

Some public comments did not apply to any of the nine planning themes but are still being considered in the planning process. These comments are generally related to agency consultation and the overall RMP process. Future steps in the RMP process are summarized in Section 5.

Although not a designated planning theme, as discussed in Sections 1.5 and 1.6, consultation with other agencies and local tribes is imperative to a successful management plan. Several agencies are preparing or have already prepared similar land management plans and/or have implemented resource-level plans (e.g., fire management plans, weeds programs). Consultation can save time, money, and effort for all parties involved and can generate more effective approaches to broad-scale issues.

Public Comment Summary

The BLM was encouraged to consult with the Nez Perce Tribe, the Forest Service, and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, as well as neighboring BLM field offices, and to incorporate relevant effective approaches to such issues as land tenures and habitat protection. Comments received regarding the RMP planning process specifically requested a thorough evaluation of cumulative effects, alternative formulation, and overall NEPA compliance review. Agencies and tribes should be consulted during these steps to ensure that all potential impacts are addressed.

Table 3-10
Planning Classification for Public Comments Not Applicable to Planning Themes

Comment	Planning Classification ¹			
	A	B	C	D
RMP consistency with the Interior Columbia Basin Strategy	X			
Coordination between the BLM and the Forest Service is crucial as most of these areas are adjacent to or surrounded by national forest. It may be that land transfers between the two agencies are advisable for scattered tracts.	X			
The Nez Perce Tribe has taken a lead position in the development of Biological Control. I would like to see the BLM working with the Nez Perce Tribe in expanding this important alternative. The protection of wetlands and riparian areas are vital to maintain healthy watersheds, to protect habitat of fish and wildlife and the drinking water supply for area residents.	X			

Table 3-10
Planning Classification for Public Comments Not Applicable to Planning Themes *(continued)*

Comment	Planning Classification ¹			
	A	B	C	D
The Craig Mountain area is an exceptional wildlife area producing herds of elk, whitetail and mule deer, turkeys, chukar and grouse - just to name a few. These lands should be managed with the emphases on habitat protection working in conjunction with the Idaho Fish and Game Department and the Nez Perce Tribe. The Lower Salmon and Lolo Creek are important salmon and steelhead habitat.	X			
Insure both federal RMP's for the areas with the Hell's Canyon National Recreation Area are matching in there desired future conditions and objectives in attaching these desired future conditions.	X			
NEPA requires that each EIS examine a range of alternatives to the proposed action, including a no action alternative. 42 US Code § 4332(C)(iii). The alternatives considered must be of sufficient range to provide both the decision-maker and the public with an understanding of the full scope of possible options to achieve a purpose or goal. See 42 US Code §§ 4332(2)(c)(iii), 4332(2)(E); 40 CFR §§1502.14 (range of alternatives should sharply [define] the issues and [provide] a clear basis for choice among options by the decision-maker and the public.	X			
Since the current comment period will end before the AMS is available we hope that we will be able to submit additional detailed comments under an extended deadline to be considered in establishing preliminary planning issues and criteria. Unfortunately the lack of detailed information regarding current plan objectives precludes detailed comments.	X			
Alternatives should identify the purpose and need for the proposed management direction; resource/environmental conditions that will result from application of proposed management direction; and estimated outputs of goods and services, timing and flow of outputs, costs and benefits, and resource management/protection standards and guidelines.	X			
Include "indicators" or "criteria" for ecological, social, economic sustainability.	X			
Include programmatic cumulative effects analyses to reduce the extent of analysis for each project using appropriate analysis area for each resource analyzed; and focusing analysis on the resources significantly impacted. Ecological effects may extend beyond boundaries.	X			
Land use plans must also be scientifically defensible. In developing land use plans, agencies must use a "systematic interdisciplinary approach to achieve integrated consideration of physical, biological, economic, and other sciences." 43 US Code § 1712(c)(2).	X			

¹ Comments are classified as follows:

A – will be addressed/considered in the RMP

B – will be resolved through policy or administrative actions

C – are already being addressed or will be addressed independent of the RMP effort

D – determined to be beyond the scope of the RMP effort

3.5 ISSUES RAISED THAT WILL NOT BE ADDRESSED

To date, comments and concerns raised during the scoping period have been summarized in this scoping report, and the preliminary planning issues have been refined based on those comments classified as Category A of Tables 3-1

through 3-10 above. Comments and concerns classified as Categories B, C, and D in Tables 3-1 through 3-10 above will not be considered by the BLM during this RMP planning process because these concerns will be resolved through policy or administrative actions (Category B), will be addressed by the BLM independently of this planning effort and/or are concerns that the BLM is already actively addressing (Category C), or are beyond the scope of this RMP effort (Category D).

3.6 ANTICIPATED DECISIONS TO BE MADE

The BLM is responsible for multiple-use management of public lands and its resources based on the principles of multiple use and sustained yield in accordance with the FLPMA. Management direction resulting from the planning process for the RMP needs to be adaptable to changing conditions and demands over the life of the RMP. RMPs provide management direction and help to determine decisions regarding appropriate multiple uses and allocation of resources, develop strategies to manage and protect resources, and establish systems to monitor and evaluate the status of resources and effectiveness of these management practices. As part of an analysis of the management situation, the BLM is reviewing the existing condition of the environment and existing management situation. At the same time, the BLM is identifying which existing management decisions should be continued, which existing management directions should be modified, and/or which new management directions should be developed and added.

This scoping report does not make any decisions, nor does it change current management direction set forth in the 1981 Chief Joseph Management Framework Plan. It only summarizes those issues distilled from comments identified during the scoping period for the Cottonwood RMP planning area. Issues summarized in this scoping report (Section 3.2), along with subsequently identified issues, planning criteria, and other information (e.g., occurrence and development potential for minerals), will be used by the BLM and cooperators to help formulate a reasonable range of alternatives during the next phase (i.e., alternative formulation) of the RMP process. Each identified alternative (including continuation of existing management) will represent a complete and reasonable plan for managing the Cottonwood Field Office. Future decisions to be made will occur at two levels: the RMP, or land use planning, level, and the implementation level. These decision types are described below. In general, only RMP-level decisions will be made as part of the RMP process. The BLM's evaluation of identified alternatives will be documented in an EIS prepared as part of the RMP process (as required by NEPA).

3.6.1 Future RMP-Level Decisions

Future RMP-level decisions to be made will be on a broad scale. These decisions will identify management direction and guide future actions for the next 10 to 20 years within the planning area. The RMP will provide a

comprehensive yet flexible framework for managing the numerous demands on resources managed by the BLM.

The vision for the Cottonwood Field Office planning area will be described in the RMP in terms of desired outcomes, which represent one of two categories of RMP-level decisions. The second category of RMP-level decisions involves allowable uses and actions to achieve goals. Desired outcomes will be expressed in terms of specific goals, standards, and objectives. Goals are broad statements of desired outcomes (e.g., ensure sustainable development). Standards are descriptions of conditions or the degree of function required (e.g., land health standards). Objectives are specific, quantifiable, and measurable desired conditions for resources (e.g., manage sagebrush communities to achieve a certain canopy cover by the year 2015).

The second category of RMP-level decisions, allowable uses and actions to achieve desired outcomes, will be expressed in the RMP as allowable uses, actions needed, and land tenure decisions. Livestock grazing, administrative designations (e.g., ACECs), and land disposal are examples of some RMP-level decisions in this category.

3.6.2 Future Implementation Decisions

The RMP makes broad-scale decisions that guide future land management actions and subsequent site-specific implementation decisions. Implementation decisions are often referred to as project-level or activity-level decisions and represent the BLM's final approval of on-the-ground actions. Implementation decisions require a more-detailed site-specific environmental analysis that will tie back to (i.e., tier to) the EIS prepared for the RMP. It is noted that in some circumstances, site-specific implementation decisions may be made through the RMP process.

3.7 SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS, INCLUDING NOMINATIONS

The special designations section of the RMP will include a discussion of designated areas such as ACECs, National Historic Trails, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and WSAs. It also will consider new special management area designations, including Special Recreation Management Areas, ACECs, and river segments eligible and suitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. As summarized in Section 3.3.7 and Table 3-7, some comments stated that roadless areas and unroaded areas be studied and/or designated as Wilderness. Per the Utah Wilderness settlement, the BLM no longer inventories or studies areas for wilderness suitability (including WSA status), so current WSAs will not be expanded. The BLM did not receive any public comments during scoping that nominate specific areas for ACEC designation. However, at a December 10, 2004, meeting with the BLM, the Nez Perce Tribe recommended the East Fork of the American River for conservation and protection focus and expressed interest in the ACEC evaluation process and consideration of this area (see Section 1.6).

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SECTION 4

PLANNING CRITERIA

Scoping involves the introduction of planning criteria to the public for comment. At a minimum, the BLM must offer a 30-day comment period on planning criteria. Planning criteria guide development of the plan by helping to define the decision boundaries and focuses; they are generally based upon applicable laws, director and state director guidance, and results of public and governmental participation (43 CFR 1610.4-2). Planning criteria establishes constraints, guidelines, and standards for the planning process. Prior to the public scoping period, the BLM identified the following preliminary planning criteria to be used during the evaluation of planning issues and developing project alternatives. These preliminary planning criteria were included in the NOI and on the project Web site for public comment during the 73-day scoping period.

- The RMP will comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and current policies. This includes local, state, tribal, and federal air quality standards as well as water quality standards from the Idaho non-point source management program plans.
- The RMP planning effort will be collaborative and multi-jurisdictional in nature. The BLM will strive to ensure that its management decisions are complimentary to other planning jurisdictions and adjoining properties, within the boundaries described by law and federal regulations.
- The planning process will establish new guidance and identify existing guidance upon which the BLM will rely to manage public lands within the planning area for the next 15 years.
- The planning area is defined as the Cottonwood Field Office.

- All previously established WSAs will continue to be managed for wilderness values and character until Congress designates them as wilderness areas or releases them for multiple use management.
- The RMP will recognize all valid existing rights.
- As part of this RMP process, the BLM will analyze areas for potential designation as ACECs in accordance with 43 CFR 1610-7-2, and river corridors for recommendation and designation under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Although no specific criterion differing from those above were suggested by the public during scoping, many comments supported the method provided by these principles to evaluate the issues. Conversely, several comments opposed certain criteria, such as special designation areas. As described above in Section 3.7, the BLM is mandated to consider special management areas. Therefore, the above planning criteria will be used to guide the RMP process. Furthermore, the BLM is currently consulting with—and will continue to consult with—relevant agencies and tribal governments on issues that will support an effective planning process and offer consistency with similar processes within and adjacent to the Cottonwood RMP planning area.

SECTION 5

FUTURE STEPS

5.1 SUMMARY OF FUTURE STEPS AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES

The next phase of the BLM's planning process is to develop management alternatives based on the issues presented in Section 3.2. These alternatives will focus on addressing planning issues identified during scoping and meeting goals and objectives to be developed by the interdisciplinary team. In compliance with NEPA, CEQ regulations, and the BLM planning regulations and guidance, alternatives should be reasonable and capable of implementation. The BLM will also continue to meet with collaborating agencies, interested tribes, and community groups and individuals. A detailed analysis of the alternatives will be documented. Based on the analyses of the alternatives, the BLM's Preferred Alternative will then be selected and analyzed in detail. The Preferred Alternative is often made up of a combination of management options from the other alternatives that provide the best mix and balance of multiple land and resource uses to resolve the issues.

The analysis of the alternatives will be documented in a Draft RMP/EIS. Although the BLM welcomes public input at any time during the planning process, the next official public comment period will begin when the Draft RMP/EIS is published, which is anticipated in early 2006. The draft document will be widely distributed to elected officials, regulatory agencies, and members of the public, and will be available on the project Web site (www.cottonwoodrmp.com). The availability of the draft document will be announced via a Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register*, and a 90-day public comment period will follow. Public meetings will be held in Riggins, Grangeville, and Lewiston, Idaho, during the 90-day period.

At the conclusion of the public comment period, the Draft RMP/EIS will be revised. A Proposed RMP/Final EIS will then be published. The availability of the proposed document will be announced in the *Federal Register*, and a 30-day public protest period will follow. If necessary, a notice will be published in the *Federal Register* requesting comments on significant changes made as a result of protest.

At the conclusion of the public protest period, the document will again be revised, and the approved RMP and Record of Decision will be published. The availability of these documents will be announced in the *Federal Register*.

Figure 5-1 outlines the major milestones of the Cottonwood RMP/EIS planning process when the public will be asked for their input.

All publications, including this report, newsletters, the Draft RMP/EIS, and the Notice of Availability, will be published on the official Cottonwood RMP Web site (www.cottonwoodrmp.com). In addition, pertinent dates regarding solicitation of public comments will be published on the Web site.

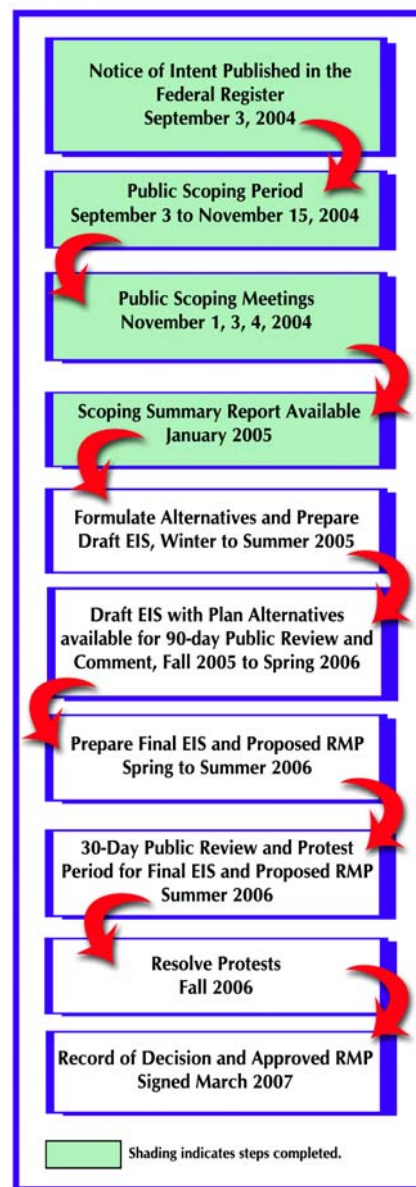


Figure 5-1
RMP Public Involvement Process
Timeline

5.2 CONTACT INFORMATION

The public is invited and encouraged to participate throughout the planning process for the RMP. Some ways to participate include:

- Reviewing the progress of the RMP on-line at the official Cottonwood RMP Web site at www.cottonwoodrmp.com. The Web site will be updated with information, documents, and announcements throughout the duration of the RMP preparation; and

- Requesting to be added to or to remain on the official Cottonwood RMP mailing list in order to receive future mailings and information.

Anyone wishing to be added to or deleted from the distribution list or requesting further information may e-mail their request to information@cottonwoodrmp.com or contact Carrie Christman at (208)962-3793. Please provide your name, mailing address, and e-mail address, as well as your preferred method to receive information.

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APPENDIX A

NOTICE OF INTENT

The attached pages from the *Federal Register* include the NOI for the Cottonwood RMP/EIS. The NOI was published on September 3, 2004, and officially initiated the scoping process for the project.

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authorized by BLM in the ROD and will not constitute a general amendment of the IAP/EIS.

EPA is a cooperating agency because it potentially has a permitting decision to make on the disposal of wastewater from camps under an NPDES permit. The alternatives presented in the FEIS discuss the use of a general permit or an individual permit. The USACE as a cooperating agency will review the proposed project pursuant to relevant Federal jurisdiction.

Henri R. Bisson,

State Director.

[FR Doc. 04-20036 Filed 9-2-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-JA-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[ID-087-1610-DO-034D]

Notice of Intent To Prepare a Resource Management Plan and Associated Environmental Impact Statement for the Cottonwood Field Office

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: This document provides notice that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) intends to prepare an RMP with an associated EIS for the Cottonwood Field Office. The planning area for the RMP, which includes 140,143 acres of BLM-administered public lands, is located in Adams, Clearwater, Idaho, Latah, Lewis, and Nez Perce Counties, Idaho. Preparation of this RMP and EIS will conform to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Federal regulations, and BLM management policies.

DATES: This notice initiates the public scoping process. Comments on the scope of the plan, including issues or concerns that should be considered, should be submitted in writing to the address listed below by November 15, 2004. However, collaboration with the public will continue throughout the planning process. Dates and locations for public meetings will be announced through local news media, newsletters, and the BLM Web site (<http://www.id.blm.gov/planning/ctnwdrmp/index.htm>), at least 15 days prior to the event.

ADDRESSES: Please mail written comments to the BLM, Cottonwood Field Office. ATTN: RMP, House 1, Butte Drive Route 3, Box 181,

Cottonwood, ID 83522-9498, or fax to (208) 962-3275. All public comments, including names and mailing addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the Cottonwood Field Office during regular business hours (7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) Monday through Friday, except holidays, and may be published as part of the EIS. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name or street address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, please state this prominently at the beginning of your written correspondence. The BLM will honor such requests to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations and businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be available for public inspection in their entirety.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further information or to have your name added to the Cottonwood RMP Mailing List, contact Carrie Christman at the Cottonwood Field Office (see address above), telephone (208) 962-3245.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Cottonwood RMP planning area is located in the southern part of the Idaho panhandle. The area is bordered to the west by the Oregon and Washington state lines, to the north by Benewah and Shoshone Counties, to the east by the Montana state line, and to the south by Lemhi and Valley Counties and the southern portion of Adams County. The Cottonwood Field Office planning area lies entirely within the ceded territory of the Nez Perce Tribe. The Nez Perce Reservation lies entirely within the planning area, and there are about 17,586 acres of BLM administered land within the reservation boundary. Management of BLM administered lands will involve trust and treaty resources.

The BLM-administered public lands within the Cottonwood Field Office planning area are currently managed in accordance with the decisions in the 1981 Chief Joseph Management Framework Plan (MFP) as amended. BLM will continue to manage these lands in accordance with the MFP and amendments until the RMP is completed and a Record of Decision is signed.

Preparation of an RMP for the Cottonwood Field Office is necessary to respond to changing resource conditions; respond to new issues; and provide a comprehensive framework for managing public lands administered by the field office. The RMP will establish

new land use planning decisions to address issues identified through public scoping and, where appropriate, will incorporate decisions from the existing Chief Joseph MFP.

Public Participation: The BLM will work collaboratively with interested parties to identify the management decisions that are best suited to local, regional, and national interests. The public scoping process will hold identify planning issues and provide for public comment on the proposed planning criteria.

BLM has identified the following preliminary issue themes:

1. Vegetation management (including noxious weeds, riparian areas and Wetlands, and fuels and forest management).
2. Fire management.
3. Management of habitat for wildlife and special status species.
4. Management of transportation, public access, and recreational opportunities.
5. Land tenure adjustments.
6. Availability and management of public lands for commercial uses (minerals, forest products and livestock grazing).
7. Management of areas with special values.
8. Tribal treaty rights and trust responsibilities.

These preliminary issue themes are not final and may be refined or added to through future public participation.

BLM has also identified some preliminary planning criteria to guide development of the plan, to avoid unnecessary data collection and analysis, and to ensure the plan is tailored to the issues. These criteria may be modified or other criteria identified during the public scoping process. The public is invited to comment on the following preliminary planning criteria.

1. The plan will comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and current policies. This includes local, State, tribal, and Federal air quality standards; as well as water quality standards from the Idaho Non-Point Source Management Program Plans.

2. The RMP planning effort will be collaborative and multi-jurisdictional in nature. The BLM will strive to ensure that its management decisions are complementary to other planning jurisdictions and adjoining properties, within the boundaries described by law and Federal regulations.

3. All previously established Wilderness Study Areas will continue to be managed for wilderness values and character until Congress designates them as wilderness areas, or releases them for multiple use management.

4. The RMP will recognize all valid existing rights.

5. As part of this RMP process, BLM will analyze areas for potential designation as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) in accordance with 43 CFR 1610.7-2 and river corridors for suitability for designation under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

July 6, 2004.

K. Lynn Bennett,

Idaho State Director, Bureau of Land Management.

[FR Doc. 04-19607 Filed 9-2-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-GG-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

Notice of Availability of Record of Decision for the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area (NCA) and Associated Wilderness and Other Contiguous Lands in Nevada, Resource Management Plan (RMP)/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), Nevada

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability of Record of Decision (ROD).

SUMMARY: In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), Bureau of Land Management (BLM) policies, and the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-554), the BLM announces the availability of the RMP/ROD for the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area Planning Area, located in northwestern Nevada. The Nevada and California State Directors will sign the RMP/ROD, which becomes effective immediately.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area (NCA) and Associated Wilderness and Other Contiguous Lands in Nevada RMP/ROD are available upon request from the Field Manager, Winnemucca Field Office, Bureau of Land Management, 5100 E Winnemucca Blvd., Winnemucca, Nevada 89445-2921, or via the Internet at <http://www.blackrockhighrock.org>. Copies of the RMP/ROD are also available for public inspection at the following repositories: University of Nevada-Reno

Getchell Library, Reno, NV; Humboldt County Library, Winnemucca, NV; BLM-Nevada Carson City Field Office, Carson City, NV; BLM-Nevada State Office, Reno, NV; Public Library, Gerlach, NV; Public Library, Reno, NV; Pershing County Public Library, Lovelock, NV; Lyon County Library, Dayton, NV; Lyon County Library, Fernley, NV; BLM-California Surprise Field Office, Cedarville, CA; Modoc County Library, Cedarville, CA; Modoc County Library, Alturas CA; BLM-California State Office, Sacramento, CA; and BLM-California Eagle Lake Field Office, Susanville, CA. Persons who are not able to inspect the RMP/ROD either on-line or at one of the locations provided may request one of a limited number of printed copies or compact discs (CDs) by contacting the NCA Planning Staff at the Winnemucca Field Office by e-mail at wfoweb@nv.blm.gov, by telephone at (775) 623-1500, or by fax at (775) 623-1503. Requests should be directed to the NCA Planning Staff, clearly state that it is a request for a printed copy or CD of the Black Rock-High Rock RMP/ROD, and include the name, mailing address and phone number of the requesting party.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

David C. Cooper, NCA Manager, BLM Winnemucca Field Office, 5100 E Winnemucca Blvd., Winnemucca, NV 89445-2921, (775) 623-1500, wfoweb@nv.blm.gov ("Attn: NCA Manager" in subject line of message).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The RMP/ROD was developed with broad public participation through a 3-year collaborative planning process. This RMP/ROD addresses management on approximately 1.2 million acres of public land in the planning area. The RMP/ROD is designed to achieve or maintain objectives that were identified in the legislation that created the NCA and wilderness areas or developed through the planning process. The RMP/ROD includes a series of management actions to meet the desired resource conditions for upland and riparian vegetation, wildlife habitats, cultural and visual resources, livestock grazing and recreation.

The approved RMP is essentially the same as Alternative D in the Proposed RMP/Final Environmental Impact Statement (PRMP/FEIS), published in September 2003. BLM received eight protests to the PRMP/FEIS. No inconsistencies with State or local plans, policies or programs were identified during the Governor's consistency review of the PRMP/FEIS. As a result, only minor editorial modifications were made in preparing

the RMP/ROD. These modifications corrected technical errors that were noted during review of the PRMP/FEIS and provided further clarification for some of the decisions.

Dated: May 10, 2004.

Terry A. Reed,

Field Manager, Winnemucca Field Office, Bureau of Land Management.

[FR Doc. 04-19606 Filed 9-2-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-HC-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[ID-086-1610-DO-006D]

Notice of Intent To Prepare a Resource Management Plan and Associated Environmental Impact Statement for the Coeur d'Alene Field Office

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Intent.

SUMMARY: This document provides notice that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) intends to prepare an RMP with an associated EIS for the Coeur d'Alene Field Office. The planning area for the RMP, which includes 96,745 acres of BLM-administered public land, is located in Boundary, Bonner, Kootenai, Benewah, and Shoshone Counties, Idaho. Preparation of this RMP and EIS will conform with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Federal Regulations, and BLM management policies.

DATES: This notice initiates the public scoping process. Comments on the scope of the plan, including issues or concerns that should be considered, should be submitted in writing to the address listed below by November 15, 2004. However, collaboration with the public will continue throughout the planning process. Dates and locations for public meetings will be announced through local news media, newsletters, and the BLM Web site (<http://www.id.blm.gov/planning/cdarm/index.htm>), at least 15 days prior to the event.

ADDRESSES: Please mail written comments to the BLM, Coeur d'Alene Field Office, Attn: RMP, 1808 North Third Street, Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814-3407, or fax to (208) 769-5050. All public comments, including names and mailing addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the Coeur d'Alene Field Office during regular business hours (7:45 a.m. to 4:30

APPENDIX B

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

Comment sought on BLM management plan

Public comment is being sought through mid-November on a proposed Resource Management Plan (RMP) by the Bureau of Land Management to administer thousands of acres within North Central Idaho.

The BLM has scheduled three open house meetings to gather input for this planning process. All meetings will be held from 5:30 to 7 p.m.

- Riggins, Monday, Nov. 1, Heritage Center, 109 South Street (behind Crumps Chevron);

- Grangeville, Wednesday, Nov. 3, National Guard Armory, 105 Northeast 4th Street; and

- Lewiston, Thursday, Nov. 4, Lewiston Community Center, 1424 Main Street.

The proposed RMP is for 144,430 acres of public lands administered by the BLM Cottonwood Field Office. These lands are located in Adams, Clearwater, Idaho, Latah, Lewis, and Nez Perce counties on the southern portion of the panhandle of Idaho. When completed, this plan will describe broad, multiple-use guidance for managing public lands in the planning area.

The BLM will also prepare an environmental impact statement to assess environmental, social and economic effects of different management alternatives. A preliminary list of issue themes to be addressed in the plan includes vegetation management; fire

management; management of habitat for wildlife and special status species; management of transportation, public access, and recreational opportunities; land tenure adjustments; availability and management of public lands for commercial uses; management of areas with special values; and tribal treaty rights and trust responsibilities.

Deadline is Nov. 15 to submit comments or concerns. Send these as follows: e-mail to comments@cottonwoodrmp.com; by mail to Cottonwood RMP, c/o Tetra Tech, Inc., 4900 Pearl East Circle, Suite 300W, Boulder, CO 80301; by fax to (720) 406-9114 (Attn: Cottonwood RMP); or by com-

pleting the online comment form on the project web site at www.cottonwoodrmp.com.

For information or to be added to the official Cottonwood RMP mailing list, contact Ms. Carrie Christman, Assistant Field Manager, BLM, Cottonwood Field Office, at 962-3793, e-mail to information@cottonwoodrmp.com, or visit the project web site at www.cottonwoodrmp.com.

*Wed Oct 27
Idaho County Free
Press*

Cottonwood Resource Management Plan Community Economic Profile Workshop is set for Tuesday, Nov. 9, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Super 8 Motel Conference Room, Grangeville.

The **BLM Cottonwood Field Office** is in the process of updating their Resource Management Plan. They will soon be holding informational meetings to receive comments from the public. Lunch will be provided, and the workshop is free. For information call

Dr. Richard L. Gardner at 859-8878.

Northwest

THE LEWISTON TRIBUNE / WWW.LMTRIBUNE.COM

Evergreen election

Ballot full of contentious races boils down to another day of waiting
> PAGE 3C

INSIDE:
Regional
news 2C



MONDAY
NOVEMBER 1, 2004

BLM asks for planning advice

Region's land users are invited to watch the process

By **ERIC BARKER**
OF THE TRIBUNE

In north central Idaho and southeastern Washington, the Bureau of Land Management often sits in the shadow of the U.S. Forest Service.

The agency's Cottonwood field office manages more than 144,000 acres, but that's less than one-tenth of the land its sister agency manages, and its lands are scattered widely be-

tween Moscow and McCall.

Despite its small regional land base, the agency grapples with the same big public land issues — managing recreation, preventing the spread of noxious weeds and balancing logging and grazing with preservation.

The Cottonwood field office has just begun a three-year process to write a new plan to guide its activities. The agency will hold a series of public meetings beginning this week to ex-

plain the process.

Most of the land managed by the BLM's Cottonwood field office is along the Lower Salmon River. But the agency also manages blocks of land near Elk City on Craig Mountain, in the Clearwater Valley and north of McCall.

Near Elk City, the agency is managing timber to reduce the threat of large wildfires.

Along the Clearwater River the agency oversees boat ramps used by steelhead and salmon anglers. The BLM manages timber and

recreation along lower Lolo Creek, a tributary to the Clearwater River.

But the field office is best known for its program governing recreation along the Salmon River beginning at Vinegar Creek and extending downriver to its mouth.

The BLM also manages the boat ramp at Heller-Bar on the Snake River, an access and take-out point for river trips on both the Snake and Salmon rivers.

The stretch of whitewater from

> See BLM, Page 6C

BLM: Salmon River stays wild, free

> Continued from PAGE 1C

Hammer Creek near White Bird to Heller Bar on the Snake south of Asotin is one of the most popular with white-water boaters.

The lower Salmon River cuts through a gorge in a series of pool-and-drop rapids that creates thrilling whitewater and leaves white sandy beaches perfect for camping.

"We are one of the last rivers where you don't have to get drawn in a lottery or make reservations, and there is no fee," says Carrie Christman, assistant field manager at Cottonwood. "That is pretty unusual. Right now we are looking at continuing that strategy."

She did say continued and expanding growth in the number of people floating the river could lead to future restrictions.

She and others at the agency are asking people who work and recreate on BLM land to tell them about any is-

sues important to them.

The new plan will cover not only recreation, but the way timber and grassland is managed, measures to prevent and in some cases promote wildfire, and how much access will be provided.

The new plan also will identify river and creek segments that are eligible for inclusion in the national Wild and Scenic River program.

Christman says Lolo Creek could be nominated for inclusion. The lower Salmon River gorge has been a candidate for inclusion for several years, but it has not been acted on by Congress.

"We manage it as if it were," says Christman.

Any river segment deemed eligible for inclusion in the program has to be further studied by the agency to make sure it meets qualifications, and approved by Congress. The program protects rivers from excessive development.

The agency will eventually prepare an environmental im-

Meeting times

Bureau of Land Management open house meetings on future management of lands will be held from 5:30 to 7 p.m. local time at the following locations:

- Tonight at the Riggins Heritage Center on South Street

- Wednesday at the National Guard Armory on Northeast Street in Grangeville

- Thursday at the Lewiston Community Center in Lewiston

pact statement that looks at the environmental, social and economic effects of its management plan. But before it gets to that point, BLM officials want the public to help shape the plan.

Barker may be contacted at ebarker@lmtribune.com

Eric Barker